

BENGALIANA:

A DISH OF RICE AND CURRY, AND OTHER
INDIGESTIBLE INGREDIENTS.

BY

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"This truth he boasts, will boast it while he lives,
No poisonous drugs are mix'd with what he gives."

Garrick.

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BENGALIANA.

REMINISCENCES OF A KERÁNÍ'S LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

A MERCHANT'S APPRENTICE.

THIRTY years ago! Well, thirty years is a very long time to look back upon. The old man with grey hair and grey beard now before you had not then yet attained the last of his teens, and was enjoying the full vigour of his youth, with a noodle's head full of bombast and fustian, and a vigorous imagination, building all sorts of castles in the air. α

Thirty years ago! What changes have occurred since then, how many friends have dropt off, how many pleasures have been numbered with the dead, how many recollections crowd on the brain and addle it! β

Well, I was yet a youngster then; not quite a boy, but hardly yet a man; slim and not ungainly,—I may say so now when I am as ungainly as a human being can be; my youthful memory stocked with quotations from Shakespeare, Milton, and Bacon regarding myself as a prodigy not unequal to the admirable Crichton.

Raw from school, with the melodious warblings of D. L. R.* still rumbling in his brains, what was this young man to do to commence with? Of course he could

* David Lester Richardson. Principal and Professor of Literature, Hindu College.

start a newspaper or a magazine; nothing, in his estimation, was easier: or, better still, he could write books for the edification of mankind in general, and the Hindu race in particular; or he might become a pedagogue, and for the benefit of others unload his brain of the perilous stuff that was playing the deuce with it. All these appeared to him to be quite easy and feasible, and promised more wealth (a consideration never to be lost sight of) than Alládin's lamp had ever fetched. But papa shook his head, and said "Nay" to every brilliant idea as it cropped up, and the upshot was that, at the age of eighteen, I joined the respectable firm of Smasher, Mutton, and Co., as an apprentice.

There were no conveyances in those days for apprentices, though now there are. The number of *ticcá ghárries* was very small—scarcely enough to meet the requirements of well-paid *keránis*; and the number of *ticcá púlkees* was still less. Those, therefore, who drew no pay, did not think it *infra dig.* to trudge to office on foot; and if any found the sun too hot for him, there was the *chúttá*, a very respectable protection for the head—I mean those *bursátee chúttás* with long poles, which—alas! for poetry and romance—have now become extinct.

Well, protected by a *chúttá*, and with a high *pugree* on my head (my first attempt to make one without previous study being necessarily very clumsy), I appeared before Mr. Pigeon, the managing clerk of the firm of Smasher, Mutton, and Co., and made as stiff a *salaám* as any Young Bengal has rendered either before or after that era. Mr. Pigeon received the obeisance with a smile. Of course he did not return it; no one has ever returned the *salaám* of an apprentice. "What did I know? What would I wish to learn? Did I understand accounts? Did I know what a ledger was? Could I docket a letter, or draft a reply?"—these and many other equally impertinent questions were launched out with mortifying volubility. They were all Greek to me; I had learnt English, but no Greek; I had never come

across such uncouth words as "ledger," "docket," or "draft!"

With smiling hopelessness Mr. Pigeon made me over to his head Báboo, Kinoorám Chuckerbutty, to make of me what he could; and with supercilious contempt the Báboo told me to mend his pens. Was Young Bengal to submit to this? Shades of Bacon, Addison, and Johnson, was the student who had kept company with you so long, and pored over your pages night and morning, now to mend the pens of an old *keráni*? But then, another thought also arose. Was the very first day of apprenticeship to be signalized by a revolt? My young noddle was troubled and vexed; the pens were mended in moody silence and discontent.

I had no idea before that I understood *dujny's* work so well. Kinoo Báboo could not mend pens himself, and those mended by me were to his liking. He became very gracious, gave me small additions and subtractions to work out—*e. g.* coolie-hire so much, add to it punka-puller's wages, then deduct floating-balances in hand, &c.; and I soon came to the conclusion that I kept the entire accounts of the firm though Kinoorám drew the pay. The very important duty of entering letters in the peon's book came also to be assigned to me; and by the end of a fortnight I thought I had fairly established a claim to a salary of at least a hundred rupees to commence with.

The fortnight past, I made a low *salaám* to Mr. Pigeon; not so stiff as on the first occasion, and yet sufficiently so to indicate that I was of the Young Bengal genus, which Kinoorám was not; and I asked how Mr. Pigeon thought I was working. There was the same smile as before, but the words were not encouraging.

"I have seen no work from you yet. What have you been doing?"

No work from me! I who had kept all the accounts of the firm for a fortnight and entered all their letters in the peon's book, I to be told that to my face, when I felt certain that I had done quite as much as, if not more

than, Mr. Pigeon had ever done in a month ! An *éclaircissement* with Kinoo Báhoó was now unavoidable. I taxed him with unfairness in not having reported to Mr. Pigeon all the assistance I had given him. He laughed outright. The sums I had worked out were all worked wrong, he said. The peon's book was ordinarily kept by a *sircár* on Rs. 8, who made the entries better than I had done.

The indignity was too great to be borne. It brought on fever, and I was laid up. I never returned to Messrs. Smasher, Mutton, and Co.'s office again.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST EXPERIENCES IN THE TREASURY.

BEHOLD me six months after seated behind the counter of the Government Treasury, this time no longer an apprentice, but hedged with all the dignity that appertains to a paid servant of the Government.

What a grand sight for a young inexperienced man of eighteen ! Rupees scattered on all sides in delicious confusion ! Bright, *juloosee* rupees, quite new from the Mint ! Small rupees—halves and quarters—equally bright and in heaps, in quantities which my inexperienced arithmetic had never before summed up. Gold—brilliant gold coins—with the quaint device of the lion walking majestically beneath the luxuriant date-tree—not in handfuls, but in bagsful and in chestsful, which the mind could not have conjured up even in dreams ;—there they were all before me scattered in every direction ! I wonder who suggested the device on the gold-mohur. The date is an Indian tree, the lion an animal of Africa. Of course one can conceive of an African lion being left in a cage on Indian soil beneath the shade of a date-tree ; but how could a lion at large be there, unless he

had broken loose from the Barrackpore Park or some big ex-king's menagerie? I think the device should have shown a royal tiger under the tree, instead of a lion. To this the critic may object that the lion represents England's motto, which the tiger would not. True; but the correct conclusion from the premises is that the lion's proper place is on an English coin. On an Indian coin the tiger is more appropriate: and altogether, it is better that England should bear on her escutcheon two royal animals in place of one, being mistress both of the east and west. But lion or tiger it was the bright gold that arrested my attention, and I was in rapture for days.

And then the sound—"chink, chink, chink!" Talk of the music of the spheres! What is it—what can it be—compared to the music of gold-mohurs and rupees? What soft variety too there was in the sound, gold giving out the most melodious "chink" imaginable; silver, one just a shade harsher, but still so pleasing: while even bright copper rang out a tune that was not unpleasant!

"Chink! chink! chink!" on all sides. How the sound rung in my ears even in my sleep. For days, weeks, and months it haunted me as a pleasing fancy—a ravishing dream; till by every-day repetition it lost its charm, ceased to please, and ultimately became absolutely annoying. Thus even the sweets of life deaden the sense of pleasure by repetition!

There were other things also for a novice to note with wonder. The number of men coming in and going out; their faces, nationality, and the errands on which they came: these comprised a study in themselves. There stands the Jew—always and everywhere the most noted of men—with a large bundle of bank-notes (I am speaking of days past when there were no Government currency notes, but only notes of the Bank of Bengal in circulation) under his arm. What has brought him here? He has bought some chests of opium, and wants to send them off to China at once, and has come to pay

down the price. There is the salt merchant scantily clad, redolent of mustard-oil, *chundán*, and putrid *áttur*, with his agent perspiring at every pore and tottering under the weight of a large bag full of rupees, waiting to have a pass for his salt. The respectable English merchant is there, with his *sircár* by his side, to pay for salt or opium, or to invest in the five-per-cent loan which is about to be closed. The up-country *koteiwál*, his mouth stuffed with *quáwn* and spices, has come for money due on London bills. The sleek, oily Báboo has stepped in for the interest of his Government Promissory Notes. The peon of some great Civilian, with all the insolence which his master's position permits him to arrogate, is clamouring for the *tullub* of his master, which he insists on being first paid. Lieut. Sabertash, of H.M.'s 290th, wants the money due on a bill from Khámptecpore, and is about to create a disturbance on the plea of precedence.

The lieutenant in his red coat is a striking sight. He has lost his temper, and has not yet found his money. Why should he not be paid first? He is an officer of the British Army; do the shroffs and *keránis* know what that means? Not paid yet? He runs up to the Burrá Sáheb and lodges a complaint. The Burrá Sáheb is an old officer of much experience, and does not see what there is to complain of. The lieutenant must await his turn; "first come first served" is the principle of the office, and cannot be departed from.

"What! not in favour of an officer of the British Army?"

"No!"

This is intolerable. Lieut. Sabertash comes down the staircase as fast as he went up. He is choking with rage, and must give vent to it. Ah! the unfortunate sepoy on duty! He has not got the bayonet fixed on his musket, in strict accordance to military rules. The lieutenant calls for the Subadár in command at once. This is his own independent element; no Burrá Sáheb can interfere with him here.

"Place the sentinel under arrest, and send him to the fort," is the sharp order given; and the man is placed under arrest at once, and despatched to Fort William.

Simultaneously, the Burrá Sáheb writes to the Commanding Officer, to complain of the lieutenant's interference, and explains that in such a crowded place as the Government Treasury the bayonet cannot be kept fixed on the musket without causing accidents to the crowd. The sepoy is released forthwith; our deponent knoweth not whether the lieutenant got a reprimand for his interference. From the Treasury he drove off with a smiling face, like a victorious soldier from the field of battle.

CHAPTER III.

HOW I GOT INTO FAVOUR.

THE alphabet of a cash office is easily learnt. "Passos," "advices," "*challáns*," "*dákhillás*," "bank post-bills," "cheques," "interest drafts," "balance per contra;" all the mystery and enigma involved in those words were learnt by me in one week. The Burrá Sáheb was a good man, overflowing with the milk of human kindness, and was pleased to think kindly of me. A sort of indirect opposition to my appointment he had urged on account of my youth; but this gave way on his being told that I had a *moonsiff's* diploma in my pocket. The law lost a clever judge! But did not the Treasury gain a most clever cashier?

As I got initiated into the mysteries of my work, I felt that the poetry of the cash office, which had charmed me on entering it, was dying out. The music of bright rupees, and even of bright gold-mohurs, had long ceased to please, and the counting of bank-notes was a bother; but I was fast getting into favour, and that kept me in spirits.

Let me see ; I believe it was in the time of the *Áfghán* War that we were sending up lots of money North-west. We had placed a large sum on board a steamer, but the Captain had left without signing the usual receipt. The money had been in my charge, and the *Burrá Sáheb* had given orders to place it on board, and so I demanded a receipt from him. He smiled. Why was the receipt necessary ? Was it not sufficient that he had given the order ? Would any one hold *me* responsible if anything went wrong with the money ? But I was firm.

“ A receipt was the usual acquittance for money paid ; and there was no reason why this particular case should be otherwise dealt with. Life and death were in the hands of God. What if the *Burrá Sáheb* died suddenly, and the Captain of the steamer bolted with the money ? Possibly I would not be held responsible ; but still I would have nothing to show that I had allowed the money to pass out under regular orders.”

I was afraid of my obstinacy, but the *Burrá Sáheb* took it in good part.

“ If I don't give you a receipt,” said he, “ will you be dreaming all night that the Captain had bolted and the *Burrá Sáheb* was dead ? ”

“ Possibly I might. I would certainly feel somewhat uneasy that everything had not been done in regular form, as usual.”

A formal receipt and discharge was thereupon given with a smile, and I rose vastly in the *Burrá Sáheb's* estimation.

Another cashier, an old man, was a bungler. It is necessary to explain to the uninitiated that all complete bundles of notes contain fifty pieces each. Of course all bundles in the hands of a cashier would not be complete, the surplusage of each description forming small bundles of from two to forty-nine notes. Well, on taking over the balance of the day one evening, the *Burrá Sáheb* came to a bundle containing forty-nine notes of 1000 Rs. each. The number was correct, and accorded with the

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figures on the balance sheet before him. But, just as the bundle was about to be dropped into the iron chest, old Goberdhone put in that that was a "missing" bundle.

"What bundle?"

"Missing bundle, sir!"

The Burrá Sáheb counted the notes over again; once, twice, three times. The number invariably was forty-nine. He went carefully over the balance sheet; there was no mistake there even of a single pie. What then did the words 'missing bundle' mean?

"You say this is a missing bundle; what is missing? Is the balance not correct? Has any note been lost?"

"Oh no, sir! that is a missing bundle only."

The patience of Job would have given way. I was at once sent for.

"What does this man mean by saying that this bundle is a *missing* bundle?"

I asked him to explain to me in *lingua franca* what he meant, and could hardly resist bursting out in laughter when he had told me.

"Well, what does the missing bundle mean?"

"Simply this, sir: it is a 'miscellaneous' bundle, that is, formed of the accumulation of different dates."

"Only that? then don't you allow this man to come up to me with the balance of the day again. Always bring it up yourself."

Old Goberdhone was savage with me; but how was I to blame?

CHAPTER IV.

THE ACQUAINTANCES I MADE.

THE Government Treasury is like a public mart, where one comes in contact with all sorts of people in the ordinary course of business. One day there came a

young English cadet, with the bloom of old England still on his cheeks—the handsomest specimen of the human race that I have ever seen. He at once became the observed of all observers; there was a crowd around him; every one was anxious to exchange words with him. I thought he would get annoyed, there were so many after him at once. But with the sweetest face in the world he had also the sweetest temper, and he laughed and chatted with everybody without betraying the least impatience. If all Englishmen had been as even-tempered as that boy, would not the race have been idolized by the Bengalis? That cadet certainly was idolized on that day.

Unfortunately men of a different stamp are more common in the world. A young Marine apprentice, attached to the Pilot Service, I think, came a few days after, and exhibited the reverse side of the national character with great force. He also had some money to receive like the cadet, but would not exchange a word with any one and was impatient of delay. He lost his temper in no time, if it can be said that he had any at all to lose. Taking up a paper-weight of shots he struck one of the assistant cashiers with it, because his work had not been sufficiently expedited. The nigger, also a young man, was quite equal to the occasion. He snatched the paper-weight from the apprentice's hand and returned the blow with somewhat greater smartness. An Englishman on being struck always returns to his senses. He is apt to consider every man his inferior who does not establish by the incontrovertible logic of force that he is his equal. The young man behaved very quietly afterwards, but he never spoke a word with any one.

After experience has brought before me many repetitions of the conduct of the Marine apprentice. Elderly men, men of business, pious Christians, or at least men so famed, have all passed in review, and betrayed the same hastiness of temper, the same precipitancy in committing an outrage, the same submissiveness when beaten back; but in an experience of more than thirty years I cannot

say that I have come across half-a-dozen examples deserving to be remembered along with that of the young cadet. The cadet of that day will be a general-officer now, but, the English army is so sparsely distributed over Her Majesty's vast dominions, that I have not been able to trace out his name.

I will now refer to another gentleman whom I also recollect with kindly feelings. He was an Áfghán—some relative of Sháh Soojáh, he said—whom the British Government had agreed to shelter. He seemed to be every inch a gentleman, treated all men with courtesy, evinced the greatest affability in his manners, and was only wanting in gratitude to the nation of whose pension he was the recipient, but for whom he had no good word to say. I wish somebody would offer a prize for an essay to explain how the English nation, who are thoroughly honest, and are always anxious to do good, come to be misunderstood and unappreciated. With some this is owing to the foible noticed in the Marine apprentice; but surely all Englishmen are not of the same stamp. Why are they all alike disliked, if not hated?

CHAPTER V.

HINDUISM *versus* CHRISTIANITY.

I WAS very much surprised one day to meet with an orthodox up-country Hindu who said he was staying at Spence's. He said that he did not know anybody in Calcutta, and not knowing where to find accommodation had proceeded to the hotel for apartments. He of course did not take his meals there. For that purpose he went over every day to Burrá Bazaár—to the shops.

This gave me quite a new idea of Hinduism. In my youth and ignorance I had mistaken the orthodox dolt

of Calcutta as representing the entire class of orthodox Hindus. I now found for the first time that Bengal had gathered a great many prejudices which were not entertained by Hindus elsewhere. What harm could there be in living in the same house with Europeans if you did not eat with them? what harm in sitting on chairs and lying on beds they had used? Northern India allowed all this; Bengal did not. I have since found still greater divergences on divers other yet more important points. No up-country Hindu carries his dying father and mother to the river-side; to them no place is better to die in than home. No up-country Hindu throws away his *pawn*, or lays by his *chillum* if there be a Mohammedan in the same *ghurry* or boat with him. No up-country Hindu when thirsty will refuse a glass of water from a leathern *moosuk*. And yet they are just as good Hindus as, if not better Hindus than, their brothers of Bengal.

In discussions on these points, which relieved the monotony of official work, we had a very good champion of Hinduism in a *mohurer* named Gungájal Báboo, an old *Vysnub* of great sanctity, who imitating the eccentricities of Krishna, had taken a second wife in his old age. He of course poolpoohed the orthodoxy of up-country Hindus, but being a *Vysnub* he was obliged in theory to cry down the restrictions of caste; and yet on this very point of caste he was a great stickler. The phases of Hinduism are so multiform that it is extremely difficult to reconcile them one with another.

The amours of Krishna were of course a prolific source of banter, but I shall never forget the earnestness of the old man when he explained the tenets of his faith with an unruffled temper. "Krishna was—what? the same as Christ,—an incarnation of the love of God. *God is love*: the whole life of Krishna explains this, for it explains love in all its phases; love of the child for its mother, and of the mother for her child; love between friends; love between lover and mistress; love of the worshipper for the object worshipped. What besides this does the

story of Krishna expound? There are indecent anecdotes mixed up with it: reject them as spurious; they are the conceptions of indecent minds, connected, where no real connection exists, with a tale of great purity. What is the history of Christ"—would the old man emphatically ask—"but a repetition of the story of Krishna in another, but not a better form?"

I did not concede all that the old man contended for, but I fully believed in the purity of his faith, and to this day believe that salvation is not for the Christian alone, but for all who believe as this man believed, and who are true to their belief. I have a high respect for Christianity; but I have met with few, very few Christians indeed, entitled to greater regard than this man. A very respected authority had once heard a certain Lord Bishop explaining to his congregation what sort of a place heaven was: "You will meet there with bishops and archbishops, deacons and archdeacons," &c. Well, I have no objection to all the Lord Bishops being found there; but I feel quite certain—as certain as a human being can be on such a subject—that old Gungájal will be found there too, and perchance occupying a higher position than many bishops and archbishops.

CHAPTER VI.

CHOTÁ SÁHEBS.

I HAVE spoken of the Burrá Sáheb of the Treasury, but as yet the reader knows nothing about the Chotá Sáheb. During my incumbency of about eight years there were four Burrá Sáhebs, and five or six Chotá Sáhebs; but of course it is not necessary to describe them all. As a rule Chotá Sáhebs everywhere are short-tempered young men, knowing nothing, who expect the *ámláh* to do everything

for them, and at the same time to show them the same deference and respect as, or a shade more than, what is conceded to the Burrá Sáheb. There is no man who exacts respect more punctiliously than he who doubts his right to it.

But our Chotá Sáheb was on the whole a good man,—vain, as young men will be, flippant also, but not mischievously inclined. A fraud had been practised on the Treasury, and a small sum taken out on an interest-draft which had been paid before. The order of second payment bore the Chotá Sáheb's signature. At first his only fear was as to the view the Government would take of the matter with respect to himself; and his only thought was how to gloss over his share of the blame, and who to sacrifice as his scape-goat. Somebody suggested that perhaps the Chotá Sáheb's signature on the document was not genuine. This was a wisp of straw to the drowning man. He clutched at it with intuitive eagerness. "Of course it is not my signature! Does it look much like it? I will swear in any court of justice that it is not my signature!" And so the difficulty was tided over, and the loss paid up by the *ámláh*. The Chotá Sáheb, freed from blame, was not unwilling to pay. But the amount was very petty, and the *ámláh* did not trouble him.

It was matter more serious when the Chotá Sáheb began to sign all sorts of papers that were brought to him. Somebody had to pay a large sum of money (eighty thousand Rupees, I think) into the Treasury on account of somebody else. He submitted the usual *challán*, or tender of payment, to the Chotá Sáheb for signature, the *challán* being accompanied by a receipt which was to be signed after the money was actually paid in. The Chotá Sáheb signed both simultaneously. There was the acquittance signed and delivered without a single pice of the debt having been actually realized! It fell to my lot to explain to the Chotá Sáheb his mistake.

"Mistake! what mistake? 'If I was not to sign the paper, why was it brought to me?'"

"It was brought to you only for an order on the *challán* to authorize the cashier to receive the money."

"Well, have I not signed that?"

"Yes, you have. But you have signed the receipt also before receiving the money. You ought to have waited for the cashier's acknowledgment."

"Who is the cashier then, and why did he not send in his acknowledgment?"

"Because he has not received the money yet."

"But why has he not received the money yet? Why did he not receive it ten days ago?"

"The payment was not tendered till now."

"Bless me if I understand all this! What has gone wrong?"

"This only, that if the man had chosen it he might have gone away with your receipt without paying a pice of the money due from him."

"Then let him go. He is welcome to do so, I suppose."

The case was hopeless. There was no help for it now but to speak to the Burrá Sáheb, who of course understood the whole thing in two seconds. He kept back the Chotá Sáheb's acquittance, and told me to report to him when the money was received. An order was simultaneously issued and necessary directions given to the *chaprássies* that no papers were to be taken to the Chotá Sáheb for signature except by an *ámláh* of the office. But the Chotá Sáheb never attempted to understand what all this pother was about.

Another Chotá Sáheb, equally clever, did not understand why a gold-rupee, if equal to a rupee in weight, was so much smaller in size, and why bank-notes of different values had borders of different patterns when the paper used was the same. The difference between a cheque accepted and one unaccepted was also a poser; and it was mentioned of one Chotá Sáheb whom I did not know, that he used to sign papers without looking at them, and every evening several blank papers and blotting sheets were to be found on his table signed in the usual

way along with other papers. It must not be forgotten however, that these Chotá Sáhebs were generally very young men, paid to learn their work, and not expected to perform it efficiently.

CHAPTER VII.

TRoubles OF OFFICIAL LIFE—THE SINK-HOLES OF CALCUTTA.

I HAVE not yet alluded to the inconveniences of office-life, but the reader must not conclude that there are none. The inconveniences are many and of diverse kinds. I have referred to a fraud practised on the Treasury. The attempts made to discover the culprit gave me a lot of trouble. The man who had presented the duplicate order for payment was seen by me and by some three or four other assistants. The police, with their usual brag, said that they would trace him out without fail if he were in the land of the living, and the only little help they wanted was that of some sensible person to identify him. Of those that volunteered I was selected, and dreadful was the bother I had about it. I had to accompany the police through many of the dirtiest byeways of this dirty city, to nooks and corners where no decent person desires to be seen.

I was first taken to the house of a seal-engraver. In a hut was a squalid woman, with a thin squalid child on her lap. A policeman in plain clothes accompanied me, and asked the woman to fetch her husband.

“He is not at home.”

“Oh yes, he is; he told me to come for him. Tell him the Thákoorjee has brought some *muháprasád* for him.”

I did not understand what this meant; but the word *muháprasád* was evidently the “open sesame” for admittance. The message was taken in; the man came out, more miserable looking, if possible, than his miserable wife and child. He was not the man we were looking out for. The policeman and he seemed to be old acquaint-

ances, and they had a long talk of which I did not understand a word.

Next I was taken to the ground-floor of an old two-storied house, which was in a crumbling condition. There was a drinking party within, and they refused us admittance. The policeman in plain clothes did not come up to the house, but kept at a distance, another man being sent with me, who, I understood, was the friend or companion of the party to be identified. It would seem, therefore, that there can be no sort of real confidence between knaves. As admission into the apartments was refused, my companion began to bawl out for his friend by his nickname "Kallo Ghose." We were kept waiting for a long time, and curious eyes were peering out every now and then from a small aperture which represented a window, to see who we were and what we wanted. At last, after about a full quarter of an hour, Kallo Ghose came out. No: he did not come out exactly; he just opened the door partially and showed us his face. It was enough: he was not my man; but there was no doubt of it that he was a villain of the worst stamp. He asked my companion why he had brought another man, a stranger, with him. The reply was communicated to him by signs which I did not understand. The friends it seemed to me continued to be good friends still, but Kallo Ghose launched out any but kindly glances after me. If the mysteries of Calcutta were written by a clever hand, we would know of many things which we do not dream of.

I was next carried to a flash-house kept by some unfortunate women, being accompanied by one who was a frequenter of it, while the police waited at the nearest corner. The time was immediately after nightfall; the abominations I had to witness were awful. Admittance given without much demur. The party assembled three men and two women; a third woman was lying on the floor dead drunk. There were two bottles of brandy or rum before the party, with several glasses; and they had one dish of *chabánás* also, with plenty of

chillies. Of the three men one was a big quarrelsome fellow, with a red face; another, a very thin black man whom I was expected to identify; the third was a decent-looking fellow, whom I had seen before, but whom I did not know. The bully asked our business. My companion introduced me as a novice in the school of love.

"Does he drink?"

"No; but I shall drink for both."

"That won't suit us; he must drink for himself;" and a glass of brandy was handed to me.

I refused it with thanks.

"Gulp it down," said the bully, "or I will force it down your throat. What business have you here if you won't drink? We transact no business with dry lips."

I said that I had come there with my friend to see, but not to drink.

"To see what beasts we make of ourselves?"

My companion hastened to explain that I had only come to see the beauties of the house.

"That excuse won't pass with me," said the bully. "Whoever comes where I am, must do as I do. Now, sir, will you drink or not?"

"I won't."

The bully began to gesticulate; but I knew I had only to bawl out for the police in case of need. This, however, was found unnecessary. The decent-looking person I have referred to asked me if I knew him. I answered in the negative.

"I have seen you before," I said; "but I cannot remember where or under what circumstances."

"Do you know any of our party? Honour bright!"

"Honour bright! I don't know any one of you except him who has come with me."

"Well, I know you, and the family you belong to. Give me your word that you will not mention our names, or in any way describe us to your friends, or mention in what plight you have seen us, when you go out."

"This I can safely promise, because I do not know

your names, and because my friends could not recognise you from any description I could give of you."

"A direct promise, please; otherwise I won't interfere."

I gave the direct promise required. He took the bully aside; I do not know what talismanic words he said, but the bully was at my feet in a moment, asking me to forgive his rudeness. Of course I forgave him. He insisted on shaking hands with me, and I was then allowed to depart; not without a pressing invitation from the ladies to come and see them another day.

In this manner I was carried hither and thither for some days, till the police admitted their inability to trace the delinquent.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BURRÁ HUZOOR—NATIVE SERVILITY.

THE rolling-stone gathers no moss. Bo it so; but is the reverse always true? Here was I a stationary stone for years in the Treasury that had gathered no moss to speak of. We had better roll now, thought I; but in what direction?

The office of deputy-magistrate was being newly created. The first few appointments had been reserved for members of the highest native families in Calcutta, and for well-connected European candidates. But there were many others to give away. Unfortunately, I had no friends to back me; and those who I had expected would help me, did not. Young men, however, are not easily disheartened. The appointments were in the gift of a Secretary to the Government known far and wide as the Burrá Huzoor, and I waited on him to urge my claims. On the first occasion I was received and put off; on two subsequent occasions that I called I received the stereotyped

answer—" *Phoorsut nchi háye.*" There was the great man on whom all eyes were turned, the dispenser of bounties and coveted honours, accessible only to people with long names, and to such others as made "*koornceashes*" and "*salaáms*" with both hands; but not to me and the like of me. I accepted my disappointment with impatience indeed, but still with as much pride as I could call up. Years after I had the satisfaction of receiving from the same man a message that he would be glad to cultivate my acquaintance, and, subsequently to that again, an offer of a deputy-magistrateship, which I refused. I can well conceive what Dr. Johnson's feelings were when he wrote that celebrated letter to Lord Chesterfield, than which a better return below was never given.

In the height of his greatness the Secretary to the Government would not see me. I was delighted to learn some time after that a native gentleman whom he had asked to come to him had refused to do so. This was a gentleman of independent means and station in society, who cared neither for the favours nor the frowns of the great man. He had never waited on him, though all the other big guns of Calcutta had done so, and this was a sore point with the Huzoor, who liked to see rich natives about him. He took the initiative at last, and asked to see the Báboo on the pretext of consulting him on certain points connected with native female education. The reply was that on account of domestic bereavements the Báboo never went visiting. Oh! how the Huzoor must have felt the slight.

But against one instance of this sort how many there are of a contrary kind. The great ruling passion of the native mind is servility to those in power. All our Rájáhs and Báhádoors, with their *ássás* and *sontás*, are constantly running hither and thither "to pay their respects" to this and that man—to every *topiwálláh* in office in fact, quite irrespective of his claims to such attentions. I can well understand when all this bowing and cringing originate with a purpose. Then the mean-

ness has an excuse, possibly a knavish one, but still an excuse for the despicable position assumed. But I have never been able to understand why most of our purse-proud ignoramuses, who can have no ends to compass, go on demeaning themselves *ad nauseam*, crying, "*Jo Hookum*" to every puppy that writes C.S. after his name, merely as it would seem for that meanness' sake. When Báboo Hobo Gul Ghose goes visiting great folks in all directions we excuse him, because we know that the man is living on his wit's end. An up-country millionaire, with little or no brains, runs down to Calcutta with a long train of fancied grievances requiring the immediate attention of the Government; Báboo Hobo Gul is at once at his elbow, and offers to see him through the affair—for a consideration. The bargain is concluded without demur. Báboo Hobo Gul drives down to Government House; has an interview with the Private Secretary; even introduces his friend the millionaire to the Governor-General's right hand, without speaking of his grievances, as a matter of course. The millionaire does not understand a word of English, and it costs nothing to Hobo Gul to convince him that his suit has sped well, and that it is now only a question of money. The matter will be awfully expensive; there are so many big stomachs to fill. Of course the millionaire does not mind that, and a long fable ends with the demand of a large sum of money. But Jumná Dáss Hurry Bhujun Dáss, though ignorant, is shrewd, and won't pay the whole sum at once. Half or one-fourth is after much haggling forked out at last; and Hobo Gul never appears before the millionaire again!

And yet these are the people to whom the doors of the great are always open; and the rich nincompoops who go there willingly bring themselves down to the same level with them. It is very seldom that an Englishman returns the visit of a native gentleman; yet my countrymen are too mean-spirited to resent this. ~

CHAPTER IX.

TEMPEST IN A TEA-POT—THE ENGLISH OFFICE OF
THE TREASURY.

WE were all very nearly losing our appointments one day, and that when we had not the remotest idea of such a thing happening to us. The Head Cashier had suggested some alterations in the general procedure of the office, with a view to provide greater security against frauds; but the Burrá Sáheb, a new man, had vetoed this, rejecting all the expostulations of the man who was primarily responsible for the proper working of the department. Our chief upon that submitted his resignation, which was at once accepted; and with him we all would have had to go out, as is usual on such occasions. But, simultaneously with his resignation, the Head Cashier had sent up a memorandum of his case to the Chief Secretary to the Government; and the Burrá Sáheb, just when he was about to fill up the vacancy, received the peremptory orders of the Government to leave matters undisturbed till a searching inquiry into the working of the office was made. For this inquiry a distinguished financier was selected, and it resulted in his unqualified approval of all the measures which the Head Cashier had suggested, and the removal of the Burrá Sáheb to a less onerous post. As the peons and duffries noted epigrammatically on the matter: "*Burrá Sáheb bodlee hogyá; Báboo ká oopur Lárd Sáheb burrá khosee hooáh.*" The Burrá Sáheb's nominee who was to have filled up the vacant post of course flitted as fast as he had come; and the tempest in a tea-pot being over we breathed freely again, and continued working as before.

The new Burrá Sáheb was a thorough man of business, besides being a very pious Christian. He looked into every man's work with his own eyes, without neglecting his own. A great many checks and counter-checks were

abolished by him, while he introduced various new ones in their place which were admitted on all hands to be exceedingly sensible and necessary. What did not give equal satisfaction was the selection he made in filling up vacancies. Even the best of men in some way or other manages to contract prejudices to which he steadfastly adheres. The firm conviction of this Burrá Sáheb was that Europeans always made the best office assistants, after them East-Indians, and the natives last. This is even now the opinion of many very good men, and taken in the abstract the premises may not be unsound. But unfortunately no good Europeans are to be got for the salaries given in public offices; and if you stick to your hobby, the only result is that you cram your office with the refuse of Europe. As for the East-Indians, as a rule they are men of no education, and are therefore fit only for mechanical duties, and nothing more. The Registrar of the Government Treasury was an East-Indian, a very good man, and with the best education of the East-Indian standard. He had been many years in the office, and moved quietly in the groove to which he was accustomed. But he was entirely upset by the changes which the new Burrá Sáheb had introduced, and it was no secret that, in accommodating himself to them, he was wholly guided by the advice and direction of his native assistants. Like natives also (and after all what is an East-Indian but a native?) East-Indian assistants, when in power, bring around them all their brothers and brothers-in-law to partake of the loaves and fishes on the spread board. The English office of the Government Treasury had in this way become quite converted into a snug family conclave, consisting of three brothers, two brothers-in-law, one step-son, and half a dozen cousins of the first, second, and third degree. The Burrá Sáheb wanted to infuse into this *coterie* a little new blood. A good appointment was vacant, for which several excellent native candidates were applicants. But the Burrá Sáheb would fain have a European. At last a ship-captain

recommended a nephew of his, a very young man, for the post. Of course he was totally unfit for it. But then he was a European, and—would learn. The lad had sense, but no education, and after a long schooling was barely able to get through his work as a matter of routine. He fell subsequently into bad company, took to the bottle, and got drowned.† This of course the Burrá Sáheb could not have prevented: but he might have given the office a better man than the hobnail he put in. They say that the ship-captain was the Burrá Sáheb's friend, and had shown him and his family great attention on board when they came out. Was that a sufficient justification for the choice that was made? And yet there is no doubt that the Burrá Sáheb was a very good man and a pious Christian, as I have said at the outset. But prejudices, for or against, make the best men unjust at times, and the evil is that they don't see it.

Another selection made by the Burrá Sáheb at about the same time turned out much better. This was for filling up a comparatively unimportant post, carrying with it a much smaller salary. In this case also an English lad was selected; but he answered much better than the other man, being less bumptious and more willing to learn. For other very petty posts the Burrá Sáheb brought in some natives who had served under him elsewhere, and all these turned out to be efficient assistants. But the appointment of so many outsiders caused great heart-burning in the office at the time, and made the Burrá Sáheb greatly unpopular, till his sterling good qualities developed themselves in due course.

CHAPTER X.

THE SUPREME COURT.

THE Jury nuisance is well known. I received one day a summons to dance attendance at the Supreme Court as a

juror. Many cases where gone through. One was that of an indigo-planter charged with acts of cruelty and oppression against certain ryots. In the local court he had pleaded that he was a European by birth, and therefore not subject to trial by that court. His plea in the Supreme Court was that he was not a European and therefore did not come within the court's jurisdiction. The case was gone through, and all the acts charged against him were proved; but the court having left the question of jurisdiction to be settled by the jury from the evidence, the majority contended that the court's jurisdiction was not proved. To this the minority did not at first agree, but they afterwards gave in; and thus, curiously enough, the indigo-planter got off.

What struck me particularly in the court was that, though the show was a good one, the ends of justice did not seem to be fully attained. The interpretation was execrable. What the witness said was very seldom correctly rendered, and many things were put into his mouth which he did not say. The cross-examination of counsel seemed also often to be very irrelevant: but the counsel had certain privileges which they fully asserted and would not allow to be interfered with. There was a passage of arms between the judge and the counsel on this very point.

"You have been over and over repeating that question, Mr. Twigg. I don't see what you want to elicit. It seems to me that you are taking up the time of the court quite unnecessarily."

"I beg pardon, my lord. But the question has been repeated so often most advisedly."

"You may think so; I don't: and I really cannot allow this to go on."

"Your lordship must excuse me. We have our respective duties in this court to discharge. Mine is to defend my client, and if by repeating any particular question I can throw one spark of light to clear him of the imputations made against him, I am bound to do so. And I hardly need remind your lordship that it is your

lordship's duty and that of the jury patiently to receive the evidence as it crops up."

"Very good, Mr. Twigg; you may go on."

So the counsel had the best of it, and the judge was obliged to cave in.

As a rule the jurymen also were ill-chosen. Often, very often, native jurymen betrayed strong prejudice in favour of native offenders when belonging to the higher or middling classes; much oftener still, Christian jurymen openly exhibited their strong bias in favour of Christian culprits; and the right he had of challenging jurymen rendered it almost impossible for the court to convict an offender who was ably defended, as practically the choice of his judges was left with him.

In other respects, however, the court exercised a very salutary influence, especially in checking the irregularities of the police; and some judges took a delight in taking the officers of the police to task for any cause or no cause at all, of which the following is a veritable instance. The names of the jurymen having been called, the judge observed that the number of absentees was very great, and he fined the absent jurymen Rs. 20 each.

"My lord, I am present in court," bawled out one jurymen. "My name was not correctly called out by the Clerk of the Crown, and I therefore did not answer, thinking that perhaps some other person was meant. If I (giving his name) was intended, I trust your lordship will, under this explanation, remit the fine."

Mr. MacTurk, the Deputy-Superintendent of the Police, here nudged the jurymen and told him in whispers that he must move through counsel.

"My lord, Mr. MacTurk, the Deputy-Superintendent of the Police, tells me that I must move through counsel; but as I am attending the court as a jurymen, your lordship will perhaps kindly hold that to be unnecessary."

Now, the judge, an irate man, was looking round like a mad bull, uncertain whom to gore. Was he to toss

up the Clerk of the Crown, or the juror? Neither; the juror had found out the scarlet man for him.

"Mr. MacTurk, the Deputy Superintendent of the Police," roared out the judge, "had better mind his own business, which I have observed on divers occasions is very ill performed. He has nothing whatever to do with my court and my jurors, and I beg that he will interfere with neither."

The silence in the court was profound; Mr. MacTurk was nowhere; all eyes were turned on him at once, but the ground had opened under him, and he had disappeared. Something the judge said to the Clerk of the Crown in an undertone which was not audible in court. The juror quietly elbowed up to the Clerk of the Crown, and asked him if his fine had been remitted.

"Yes, yes; you are very troublesome, B boo. I shall take good care that you are not summoned again."

And long did the juror bless his own temerity that had earned such coveted exemption.

CHAPTER XI.

DRUNKARDS AND DRUNKENNESS.

THE vice of drunkenness has been making very considerable progress within the last five-and-twenty years. I do not mean to say that a quarter of a century before there were few drunkards. There were a good many even then; but there are a great many more now. Among my office-mates of those days, say out of one hundred men, I could count only about ten who drank at all, and of these two only were drunkards. A similar reckoning now would give fifty per cent. of drinkers, and at least eight or ten per cent. of drunkards. •

I hate a drunkard. I hate even what cant calls moderate drinking. There is doubtless a great deal of truth in the

saying that the good things of life are to be used, not abused. But I don't see that it can be made applicable to drink, not being able to understand that wine and spirits are "good things" in the sense in which those expressions are generally understood, any more than ammonia, arsenic, and aconite. Very good medicines, but not very good "things" any of them, I think. I don't want, however, to moralize. I want simply to describe the drunkards I have known.

The variety is very great; or rather the effect of wine and spirits is very different on different men. One will take his whole bottle of brandy, or one bottle and a half, (for these are the modern Bengali drunkard's usual doses,) very quietly, till he is fairly mastered, and finds his way to the gutters. Another will commence to become vehement before a quarter of a bottle has gone down, and wax more and more so as the doses increase, one whole bottle often failing to get the better of his fury. Of course both fellows are awfully disagreeable; but the latter much more so. The first only harms himself; the other, every one that comes within his reach. I cannot conceive of anything more villainous than for a man, knowing his foible, to go to the bottle again as before and then to abuse father, mother, wife, and children. Nor do they stop with abusing. Smash everything, whether it be a child's or a wife's head, a glass-case, empty bottles, or an earthen *handy*; smash everything and everybody that comes in the way. Behold the drunkard's jubilee!

Is Báboo Oghore Náth come to office to-day? Oh, yes; there he is: but he is high seas over yet, and will not be able to do any work. Has Rájendra Báboo come? No: he has been breaking all the furniture of his house last night; his wife has had a narrow escape; somebody else's bones were broken; his own hands and feet have been cut awfully, and he cannot come for some days. Now, should not some one have summary jurisdiction to prescribe a good dose of shoe-beating every time this occurs? A shoe-beating, mind, is the only treatment that effects

a radical cure. There is no other remedy, and to my knowledge a good shoe-beating has never failed.

But how does the vice spread? It is so loathsome in its best phases, and the liquid fire is so hard to swallow, that one would think the infection would never catch. It does catch, though; and there are hoary villains who make it a trade to find recruits for the d—l's regiment. An old fellow of my acquaintance, and, sooth to say, a well-educated man, who once held a very respectable office under the Government, having drunk out all his substance and pawned his soul to the d—l, has to my knowledge been very assiduous in ruining others. Young men—younger, in fact, than his sons—were the victims chosen; the cloak assumed was friendship—great disinterested friendship—a real liking for the children—strong desire to do something for them in life—to introduce them into the highest circles, &c.; all springes to catch woodcocks, and the woodcocks were caught. I don't know how the old scoundrel was benefited. He, of course, made himself a beast as often as he liked at the youngsters' expense; but that was all he gained. In the d—l's service men work very zealously on the smallest pittance; God's service requires more substantial bribes.

CHAPTER XII.

OTHER BAD HABITS AND THEIR CURE.

"Poor rule that won't work both ways," as the boy said, when he threw back the rule at his master's head; and so the drunkard may say that all our philippics against drunkenness will tell just as well against other habits with which the bottle has no necessary connection. There certainly was one man among my office-mates who neglected his wife and children as much as, or more than, the drunkards I have named. He drew a decent pay, but not

a pice of it went home. Friends told his wife to complain to the Burrá Sáheb, and she did so.

"Now, Jagganáth, what do you do with all your seventy rupees? Your wife writes to me that you don't pay her a pice, and she has to beg for her living and that of the children."

"Oh no, sir; she has not to beg for it at all, sir. My brother supports her and the children."

"But why should your brother have to support them when you are so well able to do it yourself?"

"I am not well able to do it, sir. My seventy rupees scarcely keep me afloat."

"How is that? I thought seventy rupees to a man in your position was a good income. What does your brother earn?"

"Little enough, sir—"

"Don't try to blind me, now; let me know precisely what his pay is."

"Sixty-five rupees, sir."

"And what family has he got?"

"A wife and child."

"Then his sixty-five rupees support six souls—himself, his wife and child, and your wife and two children; while your seventy rupees are scarcely able to meet your wants. How do you account for that?"

"Ah, sir! All men have not like wants—"

"Well, Jagganáth, you ought to be thoroughly ashamed of yourself; and now mind, if out of your seventy rupees you don't pay thirty rupees every month either to your wife or to your brother, for the support of your family, I shall strike out your name from the establishment list."

"But, sir, I can't do it."

"You can, sir, and you must. I shall make you do it."

Now, what should be done to a man of this stamp, who, for the "bought smile of a harlot," sacrifices health, money, and domestic happiness, making life a burden to those whom he is bound by laws, both human and divine, to support and relieve? Here also a course of shoe-beating

would be the best cure. Our forefathers understood this, and administered the medicine in sufficient doses to keep the family in order. But those patriarchal rules have now lost their force. Even fathers and guardians cannot now take the law into their own hands, and the consequence is unmitigated misery all round. There should be some one authorized to deal summarily with cases like these. The legal process of applying for maintenance and all that is too uncertain; and besides it does not cure the patient. I view both drinking and a bad life in the light of violent diseases which require violent treatment. My faith in the efficacy of the cure I have named is deep-rooted. The difficulty is in getting a doctor to administer it.

The word "doctor" draws out a chain of new ideas on the subject. Do not several of our doctors (I mean our Bengali doctors) aid and abet the offenders—both by precept and example? I speak only of matters personally known to me. I felt sick myself and sent for a doctor—a countryman of mine. The complaint was a bad stomach, bad digestion, occasional pains.

"Oh," says the doctor, "no medicine is necessary. Take cocoa-nut milk—one entire cocoa-nut—after every meal, or take a bottle of beer."

"But why beer, doctor, if cocoa-nut milk will do as well? The cocoa-nut will come cheaper and never make me tipsy."

"What! are you afraid of getting tipsy, or have you really conscientious objections to the beer?"

"Very conscientious objections indeed, unless it be absolutely necessary."

"Then the cocoa-nut will do just as well, perhaps better. But nine people out of ten would have preferred the beer."

Doubtless they would, and therefore should the doctor be more wary in naming it. His is a high avocation, and he should not pander to the d—l if he can help it. If the beer be necessary, of course it is right that he should say

so. But when such a harmless thing as the cocoa-nut will do as well, it ill becomes an educated man and a gentleman to suggest the use of that less harmless alternative which the giddy-pated are sure to prefer. We all have responsibilities in life. One unthinking word may light up a conflagration which all the waters of a whole river will not quench. I did not say all this to the doctor ; but the thoughts occurred to me.

CHAPTER XIII.

FORGERY TRIALS.

A CASE of forgery has come up before the police magistrate, Mr. Bully, and my evidence is wanted. A Mr. Impudence has forged the signature of his brother, Mr. Stanley Impudence, the well-known aristocrat. I happen to know Mr. Stanley Impudence's signature, and am hauled up before the magistrate to say what I know.

"Your name is so and so? you are employed in the Government Treasury?"

"Yes."

"Do you know the signature of Mr. Stanley Impudence?"

"Yes; pretty well."

"'Pretty well' won't do. I must have clear and definite answers."

"I know it very well then, your worship; exceedingly well."

"How do you come to know it so well?"

"In the course of business."

"Do for goodness' sake explain what you mean by such an indefinite expression as 'the course of business,' which may mean anything or nothing."

"I have seen Mr. Stanley Impudence sign papers in my

presence very often, and have observed the signature carefully.

"Just look at the signature attached to this document: Do you recognise it as Mr. Stanley Impudence's signature?"

"No."

"The name is correctly written?"

"Yes."

"But it is not the signature you know?"

"No, it is not."

"Is it like Mr. Stanley Impudence's signature?"

"No; there is an attempt at imitation, but not a successful one."

"You would not pay money on that signature?"

"No, I would not."

Here my evidence terminated. Similar evidence of others was taken, and then the case was sent up to the sessions. Mr. Bully was an excellent magistrate, but he liked to have scenes in his court: he was an old player who had not given up his stage tricks on being promoted to the bench, and so he continued to act on to the end of his life. Our evidence in the case would not have been required, but that Mr. Stanley Impudence, who had refused to pay the forged cheque, did not appear to give his testimony about it, expecting, perhaps, that his brother might escape the clutches of the law if he kept back. My evidence and that of others who deposed to the same effect removed this hope, and Mr. Stanley Impudence, putting the best face on the matter, came forward at the sessions to deny his signature. Our testimony was therefore not taken at the sessions trial, but we had to attend all the same, lest friend Stanley should shy back.

Mr. Stanley Impudence and I were old acquaintances; but he cut me at the court, I suppose for the evidence I had given against his brother at the police. He stared me in the face; but I out-stared him. There was no chance of Mr. Stanley Impudence getting over me in that way. His brother was convicted and transported.

I saw another trial for forgery at the same sessions—the culprit in this case, also being a European and of respectable connections. The Judge personally knew the prisoner and his friends in England; he said so in passing sentence on him. As there were no extenuating circumstances, he was obliged to pass the usual sentence of transportation, and the prisoner left the dock in hysterics. His friends afterwards succeeded in procuring a remission of a portion of the punishment, the local Government having the power to grant such remissions. Perhaps the young man deserved this kindness—perhaps he purchased it by his good behaviour. A similar recommendation in favour of a native offender—Sibkissen Banerjee—was not acceded to. I don't mean to say that Sibkissen deserved any show of kindness; but the recommendation on his behalf was based on equally good grounds, namely, age and good behaviour since transportation.

CHAPTER XIV.

ASSAULT AND BATTERY.

It is past 3 p.m.; some ten minutes after the time when the Treasury ceases to receive or pay money. An English woman (look at her bloated face and squalid dress; you cannot call her a *lady* even out of courtesy) runs in with a bill due at sight, and insists on its being paid. The *ámláh* are unable to comply, and she is referred to the Burrá Sáheb; but she has run out of breath, and is unable to go up. Go up she does at last; but the Burrá Sáheb is very sorry that he cannot help her.

“It is only ten minutes after three o'clock.”

“Yes, just ten minutes too late.”

“But surely you can pay me now quite as well as you could have done ten minutes earlier?”

“There must be a time to stop. If I pay you now, and

another person comes five minutes after, how can I refuse him?"

"Mine is an exceptional case, Mr. —; I am a lady."

"I am quite unable to accept the case as an exceptional one."

"You are very unaccommodating. I expected greater civility from you."

"Mrs. Horne, you are forgetting yourself."

In great sulk the woman withdrew from the Burrá Sáheb's room. The cause of her importunity was soon made apparent. An old money-lender had lent her some money some months before. Neither money nor interest had yet been paid, and he had been put off for weeks and months. He then threatened to bring her up before the Court of Requests (now called Small Cause Court), and this she was anxious to prevent by paying down the interest at once. The bill had been shown to him, and he was willing to receive the interest in part payment without resort to law.

"Well, Mother Horne! have you got the money?"

"No, you stupid. These fellows here refuse to pay me to-day."

"But I must have my money immediately. I have many dues of my own to pay."

"Then go to h—ll and get the money. You don't get any from me."

"I must get from you. You have put me off from day to day. You must pay the interest this evening, or I shall pass on to the Court of Requests."

"I shall prevent you from doing that; I shall make you lame!" and no sooner said than done, she gave him a tremendous kick with one of her elephantine legs. The poor old man fell down much hurt. The bystanders took him up and helped him to the Burrá Sáheb's room, to lodge a complaint.

"What can I do for you, old man? I can't interfere in the matter. You should go to the police."

"But, sir, she kicked me in your Treasury, and I complain to you. What else can I do? She is a lady."

"I don't know what you can or cannot do. She is *not* a lady. If you had returned the kick, I would not have interfered. A woman that misbehaves in such a manner is not entitled to the privileges of her sex. But I cannot help you, old man. You must go to the police." He did go there; but the police inflicted a nominal fine only.

There was another case of assault and battery within a short time after. A great Báboo—a millionaire—had come to the Treasury for interest due on his Government Promissory Notes. His carriage was standing at the door. An English gentleman comes soon after in his buggy, and tells the coachman to drive forward. This the pampered servant of a millionaire won't do. The Englishman gives him a whipping. The Báboo's *durwáns* and *syces* surround him, and the Báboo himself runs out to the landing-place.

"You beat my coachman? Who you? Why you beat my coachman?" The gentleman tried in vain to explain to him that the coachman was to blame in not clearing out from the landing-place.

"I see you in the police. Why you beat my coachman? You know who I?"

"Don't make a scene here, Báboo. If you want to go to the police, I have no objection. But ask other gentlemen—ask the Báboos in the Treasury—everybody will tell you that the landing-place must be left clear for the last arrival."

"But why you beat my coachman? tell me that;" and so it went on for some time, till cards were exchanged, and then counter actions were brought in the police. Of course, Lakhapati Báboo came off second-best.

Unfortunately these illiterate Báboos represent all native gentlemen in the estimation of Englishmen. They are insolent themselves, and teach their servants to be insolent. A part of the whipping that the coachman received might have been advantageously administered to the Báboo

himself. The arrogance of Lakhapati Báboo sadly requires a cure. Education has done nothing for them ; they have received no castigation at school ; a little whipping now and then would be of inestimable service to themselves.

CHAPTER XV.

UGLY MISTAKES.

I NEVER received any reproof in the office but twice ; once when I made a mistake myself, and the other time when I corrected one made by the Chotá Sáheb. It was on this last occasion that I learnt for the first time that men in authority make no mistakes. It was a glaring blunder that I pointed out. A debit entry had been made on the receipt side of the account sheet, and the totals of course did not square. All the items had been checked one by one, but as the amounts had agreed, the entry on the wrong side of the account had not been detected. More than an hour had been lost in this way by the *huzoor*, when, partly by guess and partly by intuition, I laid my finger at once on the item which required to be expunged from one side and taken over to the other. The Chotá Sáheb was furious. He first maintained that the entry was perfectly correct, and that my suggestion betrayed but little knowledge of accounts. I took the rebuke quietly, and by deducting the amount from one side of the account and adding it to the other showed that the totals came right.

"What then ? That did not prove that a receipt was not a receipt ?"

"No ; but an examination of the voucher will show whether the amount was a receipt or a payment."

"I did examine the voucher when I made the entry. Surely you don't mean that I make these entries at haphazard ?"

"Of course, I don't mean that. What I mean is that, in the hurry of business, the entry that was intended for the payment register was made in the receipt register."

"Absolutely impossible! I would consider myself unfit for any work if I made such a mistake."

By this time other assistants had been going through the vouchers in the file, and, the one required having been found, it proved that my surmise was correct.

"I must have been very stupid at the time," said the Chotá Sáheb, "to have made the mistake. But how is it that you could not detect this sooner? You have been going over the account sheets with me for the last two hours. I, as having made the wrong entry, was not likely to discover the error; but you, as a looker-on, ought to have detected it at once."

"It always takes some time to determine in what way a mistake of the sort would occur. It is difficult to detect such an error immediately."

"Not difficult at all, I should say. If I were a looker-on, I could place my hand on it at once. I would do so by intuition. No great knowledge of accounts is necessary to detect a mistake of this kind. Your wits are not so sharp now as they used to be."

It was useless contesting the point further with such a man. Instead of thanking me for finding out his error and relieving him of further trouble in the matter, he seemed to take a pleasure in blaming me for the delay in making the discovery, as if that exonerated him from the blame of having made the mistake. I therefore kept quiet, accepting the reproof as one of the many disagreeable but inevitable attendants of service. It is little evils of this nature that make service so unpleasant. They are not, it is true, of every-day occurrence, but they leave an impression on the mind long. A very great amount of forbearance and philosophy is necessary to override the petty evils of life.

I detected another more serious error of a different kind on another occasion; but this was an error committed

by an office-mate, and the detection of it not only brought thanks but a handsome treat to the whole office. In paying a demand of Rs. 25,000, a brother-cashier, intending to pay it in five-hundred-rupee notes, had by mistake paid out 50 notes of Rs. 1000 each. The *mohurer* who assisted the cashier had also by mistake entered the notes as five-hundred-rupee pieces, but my eyes were caught by the borders of the notes (bank-notes of different values bore different border-marks), and I at once saw that something was going wrong; so I took the notes out of the *mohurer's* hands just as he was about to make them over to the payee, detected the error, kept back half the number, and had the necessary alterations made in the number book. The cashier was ignorant of all this at the time; the secret was kept between the *mohurer* and me, the surplus notes being retained in my possession. In the evening there was consternation and dismay, for notes to the value of Rs. 25,000 were missing. The cashier was an elderly man, and I did not like to keep him long in suspense and misery, though I was advised by others to procrastinate. The notes were produced and placed in his hands. The old man was in ecstasies, and a treat to the whole office on Sunday following proved substantially the sincerity of his thanks. I allude to this matter only to juxtapose the conduct of the Chotá Sáheb with that of a despised nigger.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FREAKS OF FORTUNE.

THE wheel of fortune always goes round; but have we no hand in guiding it? Good fortune, I believe, is providential. We are often in luck's way, in spite of ourselves. But for bad fortune, who generally is more to blame than he who suffers from it? One old man took

service in the Treasury on a salary of six rupees. Six rupees in those days was not quite so insignificant a sum as now, and yet it was small enough. Four rupees was peon's pay, and six rupees was barely above peon's grade; so that the man who did accept it, if of higher status, was undoubtedly of straitened means. This man that I was speaking of was of a good but poor family. In childhood a childless man of means adopted him, and dying left him, when he was about twenty years old, a small but decent fortune of a little above Rs.10,000. No sooner did the money come into his hands than he began to think how it could best be spent. The idea of keeping it and living on it never occurred to him. Advisers are never wanting when there is substance to swallow. Some suggested convivial parties, others Machooá Bazaár company, and interested parties gifts to Bráhmans and the like. But the young heir was an original genius, and had a hobby of his own to ride. He had seen tigers in menageries; he wanted to see how the lord of beasts stalked in his native woods at large. No sooner thought of than it was done. The idea was too bright and original to sleep upon. Boats were procured and manned with *páiks* and *shikáries*, and an excursion undertaken through the creeks of the Soonderbuns. A large party had to be taken, because those creeks in past days were (and perhaps now are) infested by robbers, and the excursion was a somewhat prolonged one, as the feline monarch was not disposed to be very obtrusive. At last, after much bush-beating, a whelp somewhat larger than a pariah dog was seen—only for a moment, for he ran off to the higher jungles on becoming conscious of the proximity of man. The heir to another's fortune of Rs.10,000 was highly delighted; the one wish of his heart was now fully satisfied. His dream of dreams was realized; but the money had also slipped out, and he came back to the poverty in which he was born, and from which even Providence had tried in vain to rescue him. The subsequent history of his life is that of a constant struggle for the necessaries

of existence, till in his old age he was obliged to enter the Treasury on the pittance I have mentioned, to discharge the duties of a subordinate *sircár*, scarcely distinguishable from those of a menial servant.

Another assistant of the Treasury whom I would here immortalize was a broken-down *poddár*, who in the hey-day of his life had made a good deal of money by his profession, and more especially by the purchase of stolen goods. But what Satan helped him to, he also helped him through. The wealth thus acquired was spent in a manner equally, if not more, disreputable. He was a man of the old class, and not addicted to liquid fire; but he liked his *chillum* of *ganjá* and *churus*, and in his old age delighted to recount the number of frail women he had known. This garrulity was all the treasure left to him. He had not a pice in his pocket now; his clothes were tattered; he had no respectable relation who owned him; and, saddest of all, he had no wife or child to take care of him. He also had taken service in the Treasury on a pittance of six rupees a month; but his only regret now was that the females he had known—some of whom were still living—took no further notice of him.

A third acquaintance of the same class was a man of the weaver caste, who at one time had a good shop and flourishing business as cloth merchant in Natoon Bazaár. He was a very open-hearted fellow, and used to recount the stories of his own roguery with great glee. He had made some money in his day; but he led a cat-and-dog life at home, of which the presiding genius was a shrew. He could also never agree with his son, and between them all the money went out as fast as it had come, so that in his old age he was obliged to seek the sinecure's refuge in the Treasury on the same pittance as the others I have noticed.

CHAPTER XVII.

A NEW BURRÁ SÁHEB.

“WHEREVER you see a head, hit it,” was the advice of some son of the Emerald Isle to his English friend on introducing him to a regular Tipperary row. I have been trying to follow the advice to the best of my power, and have been hitting at every head right and left about me, without, however, doing aught in malice; and, till I am better advised, I intend to follow this course.

We had a good Burrá Sáheb heretofore in the Treasury, but Burrá Sáhebs are not fixtures, and the delineation of one does not necessarily describe all others. My old friend was a pious Christian, and a good man generally to serve under. His successor is a man of an altogether different stamp. But he is nevertheless a crack financier, and one thoroughly fit for the high post which he has been selected to occupy, except in one respect only, which I shall proceed to explain. In the round of pleasures that he has gone through, he has come in contact with all sorts of scamps—brothers and cousins of his fair acquaintances, pimps and go-betweens, broken-down hotel-keepers and keepers of empty-houses, and what not? All these people are of course beggars, loafers, or whatever else you may choose to call them. Their gay friend is now a great man at the Presidency, and he must provide for them all; and the old man is weak and silly enough to yield to their pressure. The former Burrá Sáheb had never perpetrated a jobbery in office, except in the one instance to which I have referred, when he appointed the son of a personal friend of his, a young and inexperienced fellow, to a post of great importance, in supersession of many experienced and deserving men. But the youngster in question was a respectable man, very respectably connected, and became in time a passable assistant. The new Burrá Sáheb filled up every vacancy as it occurred—not one or

two, but a dozen—with men most disreputably connected, who never could make good assistants, but whose claims on him were such as he could not set aside. This caused great dissatisfaction in the office; but of course Burrá Sáhebs are not expected to care much for that. Is this an isolated picture of one high officer in one particular office only, or will the cap fit others? Keránídom would answer the question fully, if it could venture to speak out.

One of the assistants of the office had a small parcel containing books to send to England. It had been packed carefully in tin and covered over with wax cloth, when by accident it caught the Burrá Sáheb's eye.

"What business has that parcel in the Treasury?"

"None whatever," replied the assistant referred to. "It has only come with me."

"What does it contain?"

"Books."

"What books? I must open the parcel, since I find it in the Treasury."

"I have no objection to your opening it, sir; only it will cost me a trifle to pack it up again, and I shall also lose the present mail steamer, as there would remain no time to repack it to-day."

"I don't care; it must be opened;" and he took up the parcel, and carried it with him into his own room. Shortly after the owner of it was sent for.

"Now tell me truly what the parcel contains?"

"Books only, as I have said before."

"What books?"

"I won't say that, because that is not my secret, but that of another person."

"But when I open the parcel I shall know."

"Open it then, and please yourself."

"But is there anything within to please? Why don't you name the books?"

"I could not without the permission of a third party."

"Am I right in thinking that you are packing off some indelicate books or pictures to England?"

"You are completely in the wrong, sir. Books of that description come out *from* England *to* this country, and don't go out from this country anywhere."

"Is there anything within that would interest me in the slightest degree?"

"No."

"Well then, you may take away your parcel; but, mind, never bring such things into the Treasury again."

The man had, however, some good traits in his character. It is said he loved his wife to distraction, and went mad when she died. In a moment of temporary insanity he attempted suicide. His sirdar-bearer had suspected this, and stood concealed behind some almirahs, and when the master's hand was raised to blow out his brains, the servant rushed forward and laid hold of it. In the scramble the pistol went off, but hurt no one. The bearer secured a handsome pension for life. Very well, indeed, had he merited it! Call a nigger coward; it is the fashion to do so: but if this man was not brave (an unarmed man, attempting to disarm an armed madman), I do not know what bravery is.

• CHAPTER XVIII.

APPOINTMENT OF A NEW DUFFRY.

A PETTY post in one of the departments of the Treasury had fallen vacant—viz. that of a *duffry* on five rupees. The candidates were many; a long line of Kháns and Meers stood ranged awaiting the arrival of the Burrá Sáheb, who wished to make the selection himself. During the incumbency of the former Burrá Sáheb there was a similar vacancy in the post of a *durwán*, with a similar parade of up-country^{*} athletæ. The selection in both cases was characteristic. The former Burrá Sáheb asked each man his name.

"Rámdeen Ojáh."

"Ojáh won't do; I don't want a Bráhmán."

"Gugráj Doobay."

"No Doobay for me: the same objection as to No. 1."

"Mátádeen Tewáry."

"I won't have a Tewáry any more than an Ojáh or a Doobay."

"Luchmiput Chowbay."

"The same objection as before. All Bráhmans are bad men, and I won't have any."

"But why do you consider them to be bad men?" asked the Chief Cashier.

"Oh, it is a lesson of large experience. I have seen that wherever a rogue is taken up, he is sure to produce his sacred thread; and I have seen also that the natives present invariably take his side, and try to get him off."

"But that is only a rogue's trick. The rogue is not necessarily a Bráhmán. He comes provided with a thread, simply that, if detected, he might be able to appeal to the religious prejudices of his countrymen, and thus secure a safe retreat."

"Be it so. Then the man who has his thread by caste rights would have all the greater hold on the sympathy of his countrymen. I do not want such a man. You there, what is your name?"

"Lutchman Sing."

"Ah! that will do very well. Sing means a 'lion,' I think. Well, I will have the lion. He is a good stalwart man, too. Let him be enrolled."

The present Burrá Sáheb drives in in his buggy. All the Kháns and Meers make their humblest *saluám*. He does not even look at the men.

"Just read over their names."

The names are read over. One, two, three, four; he shakes his head in disapproval. The name of the fifth is Shaik Baichoo.

"Stand forth, Baichoo! Have you worked anywhere before?"

"Yes, Huzoor; in the Buxy Kháná for two months."

"Very good, that will do. Let him be appointed."

Baichoo's maternal uncle is a "Háfiz," who made a pilgrimage to Mecca, and now keeps an empty-house in Chunam Gully.

The subject stinks; and the reader has had enough of it already. The Burrá Sáheb works very hard, and, taken all in all, is not a bad office-master. When he does take the side of a worthy man, he supports him thoroughly, and no amount of opposition from higher quarters ever made him forego the side he had taken. To the public he is more accommodating than his predecessor. There is no precise adherence to three o'clock with him, and ladies and Lieut. Sabertashes always get their work done with great expedition. At the same time, he does not allow the public to crow over his subordinates. Some irascible son of Neptune had threatened to kick a *poddár* if his cheque was not attended to at once. The *poddár* reported the matter to the Burrá Sáheb, who told him not to pay the money till after everybody else was paid. Neptune Junior remonstrated. "I shall hand you up to the Government if you say another word," was the reply.

CHAPTER XIX.

SUNDRY MILLIONAIRES.

IF I have hurt any one in the short but brilliant chapters I have written, let him send me a new *pugree* or *chogá*, and I shall forget the past. Such, in the words of Joe Miller, slightly altered, should be my answer to all Burrá Sáhebs and Chotá Sáhebs who may feel aggrieved at what I have written. The public at large I have generally treated respectfully, with occasional exceptions here and there. But there must be many more exceptions in the pages to follow.

I remember that I have already described one millionaire. I can recall to mind many others whom I have known. One was a fat fair man, about forty years old when I first saw him, who fed well and dressed well—both in the native fashion—and was the owner of some ten lakhs of rupees, the interest of which he would come to the Treasury to receive. He did not know how to read and write, and, instead of signing his name, was content to put down his \times mark. Bless me! he did not know even how to speak. To every question he smirked in reply, and the *sircár* at his side was obliged to explain what he meant. The man seemed to be very good-natured though, and I dare say accepted the evils of life resignedly. Even ten lakhs of rupees, with stupidity like his, would perhaps be regarded as an unbearable evil by some, and, if allotted apart from the good nature given to him, would perhaps make many mad. But he took the infliction very quietly; ate, slept, and was merry in his own way, as an orthodox Hindu.


Millionaire No. 2 whom I remember was equally illiterate. He also did not know how to read and write, and did not sign his own name; but he was of the genus "Young Bengal," from the tassel of his cap to the tip of his boots, and always dined at Davy Wilson, the baker's.* The whole aim and end of existence to him were comprised in dressing smartly, dining at Wilson's, and driving out in the course to stare at ladies. Where he slept the d—l only knows. They say that Sibkissen Banerjee, the convict I have referred to in a previous chapter, once gave him a smart whipping, because he wanted to have the precedence of him somewhere. The place need not be named. Sibkissen was then in the height of his impudence, and the millionaire had the worst of it. He drank out his fortune, and left his widow a beggar.

Millionaire No. 3, when I knew him, was a young man—scarcely above twenty-five. •He had been once at

* Now known as the "Great Eastern Hotel."

school, but, of course, had learnt nothing beyond being able to order hot tiffin from Wilson. The one sole object of his life was to have a new mistress every day, with wine and *tamáshá* in her company; and each new day was an exact repetition of the days past by, with such incidental variations as chance brought about. Over the wine-bottle he bet with a chum that his companion for the day was the prettiest woman in the town. His friend maintained that he knew another who was prettier. A wager was laid. The two scarlet ladies were brought together; their admirers retained their respective opinions; hard words were exchanged; the wine-bottle was triumphant; and the millionaire got well kicked. But he did not lose his friend for all that, the very slight disagreement between them, which only ended in kicking, being easily made up next morning. Are these over-drawn sketches? They are taken from the life, the name of the parties only being withheld.

Millionaire No. 4 was a Young Bengal in days past, but became an Old Hindu towards the termination of his career. He was a person of parts, and went through a splendid fortune, contracted debts, got cured of his follies, entered a profession, and amassed another fortune bigger than his old one. He all at once donned the appearance of respectability, made his *poojás* with great parade, and affected to be a representative man of the highest order. But he was old Satan himself under his clothes; kept a venerable pimp in his pay; cheated right and left, notwithstanding that he already possessed more money than he knew what to do with; and finally completed his misdeeds by leaving his son a beggar. He was the only rich man with a very cruel heart that I know of. Just before the Treasury a poor cooly with a heavy load on his head fell down before his carriage; the driver pulled up; the carriage stood still, but only for two minutes, to allow the cooly to get up. The great man within was in a terrible passion; he ordered the poor cooly to be well whipped; two or three cuts



were given to him, when the bystanders—one or two European gentlemen from Sponce's—interfered so vigorously that the coachman was obliged to desist.

Ah! my masters! This is a very bad world to live in, and a poor *keráni* sees very little to envy in those who are placed above him—especially among millionaires, who make so much fuss in the world. An acquaintance of mine, who had a name at school, and joined the mercantile line when I became a *keráni*, is now a beggar in the streets, simply from having kept company with millionaires, and contemned all humbler fry. I would rather be a dog and cry "Bow wow" than go after a millionaire, that I may be taken for a great man too.

CHAPTER XX.

SCRIBBLING VINDICATED.

"COME, boys, let us leave off work and go to sawing wood," as the blacksmith proposed to his apprentices, who were grumbling over the task he had assigned them; or, as the farmer said to his hired men, "Let us play digging cellars by moonlight after the day's work is done." This is very good advice to follow, particularly for young men, who, if they are lazily inclined, are sure to go to the bad. Excluding office hours, there is plenty of idle time hanging on most of us, and we must find occupation for them, or some other gentleman is sure to forestall us. Work! work! work! It is the condition of our existence, and we must abide by the condition manfully. Nothing is more painful or more tedious than to be idle, and nothing can be more dangerous.

To the above sage advice, which is not a very new one, I will add a sager maxim, which also has run many editions, that every man who minds his own business, without troubling himself about that of other men, can

always create for himself plenty of work to keep him well employed. In this respect, an office-mate of mine set all of us a good example by selecting for himself the idle trade of a scribbler. Yes: the trade is called an idle one, and is so to 'this extent, that it brings no money to the till; but it never fails to find full employment for those who seek it; and it carries with it its own reward—as well as its own punishment also! And so the person I refer to found it; and so others will who follow the good example. He began by tagging verses, and spinning out long yarns in prose, on all and every subject, merely to kill time; and long columns of prose and verse began to appear regularly, week after week, in the Saturday-evening papers with his full name attached to them, he being then at that age when people fancy themselves to be unusually clever, and are particularly anxious to see their names in print. Of course his effusions were nothing to speak of; but he did not think so, and, besides keeping him well occupied, they did him the great service of introducing him to the public at large, which eventually was of much benefit to him. One or two very clever men, high in the public service, were pleased to see something in them, not exactly of merit, but of indications of future usefulness; and this encouraged the writer to go on, though young fellows like ourselves, who envied him vastly, lost no opportunity to disparage his efforts, irrespective of the private feeling which we felt was gnawing up our vitals. He was not, however, to be easily put out. His success increased with his years; and eventually the magazines and reviews were glad to accept his contributions.

This young fellow, like me, had no friends to push him on in life; but his scribbling did that for him which his so-called friends would not. The head man of an Account-office, who had noticed his writings on several occasions, was pleased to think that he would do particularly well as an assistant in his department, where there was plenty of letter-writing; and from the chrysalis

state of a Treasury-clerk he was at once converted into a veritable *keráni*. Among the papers of recommendation produced by him was a letter addressed to "Douglas Bennett, Esq.," written by the editor of the best magazine of the day, advising the transmission of a cheque for a specified amount in payment of a particular contribution.

"Who is this Mr. Bennett?"

"I am Mr. Bennett, sir," was the prompt reply.

Mæcenás smiled, and the appointment given to the young man on probation was at once made *puccá*. Oh! how I envied his good fortune! and did I not tease all my friends that I was not equally lucky! For weeks and months I screeched about like a madman, disparaging the merits of the man who had succeeded, and cursing Mæcenás who had failed to discover my superior worth. Such is friendship! Such is life! At last, as chance would have it, I too was successful, and, success curing envy, I bade adieu to the Treasury with hearty good-will, and joined my old office-mate in his new office, once more as a friend, under the respectable designation of an examiner, from which grade I was sometime after promoted to that of a drafting-clerk.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE REGISTRAR.

Now, then, for reminiscences of the Account Department, which I shall begin by introducing to the reader the Registrar of our new office, Mr. Milk-and-Water, a very quiet gentleman—exceedingly fussy, but absolutely harmless. He did not understand any work himself, nor did he pretend to do so. In the struggle he had for bread, he tried his hand at everything, from indigo-planting to the occupation of a broker; but he did not succeed in any.

When put to his wits' end, he thought he would make the best of his stalwart person, and, with this view, entered the service of a gentleman high in the public service on a very small pay. Mrs. Percy soon took a liking for her husband's personal assistant, and when Mr. Percy died some years after, Milk-and-Water stepped into his shoes without any difficulty. A Civil Servant's widow always has many friends, and Mrs. Milk-and-Water had only to ask to get her new husband his present high post. Is not this a nice way of getting on in life? Only very few persons have the necessary qualifications.

I knew of another very similar case in which an East-Indian assistant on small pay got into the good graces of his master's wife, and associated with her after her husband's death. Here there was not the same success in life on the part of the lady's favourite, first, because the living together was a great scandal and drawback in itself, and, secondly, because the fellow had no ambition, being quite content to spend the lady's fortune (a very handsome one), which she, with a fatuity common under such circumstances, allowed him freely to squander. This man held a small post in a Government office. He died a sudden death, they say, in his sleep, while in the arms of the woman who loved him so dearly.

Well, Mr. Milk-and-Water's fitness for the post he held need not be further discussed. He did hold the post, and no man who had the good fortune to work with him ever complained of it. He knew his own shortcomings well, and never tried to lord his authority over those below. Of course he was fussy—very fussy, as I have stated. How can the head of an office, who does not understand his own work, preserve the respect of his subordinates without being fussy? "Do this," "Do that," "Is the work done?" "Quick, please"—to assistants; and to the Burrá Sáheb (Chief Accountant)—"Oh! I shall see this done, sir," "This will be attended to at once," "The other work you will get in no time,"—was all he had to practise every day. With

most Burrá Sáhebs this was enough. So long as the work was done, they cared little who did it; and inefficiency at the top is, as a rule, seldom a defect to note upon. It is inefficiency at the bottom, or towards the bottom, that is always critically observed. Occasionally, however, Mr. Milk-and-Water caught it, and I was an accidental witness of this on one occasion. The Burrá Sáheb had got very angry over something which old Milk-and-Water had not been able to explain. I do not know what the matter was. I had been simultaneously sent for about some other work, and only came in to hear the last part of the great man's rebuke.

"Mr. Milk-and-Water, I see you can't understand anything. You are absolutely fit for nothing, sir. Very well, you can go now."

After this my work was disposed of, and, when I came out of the Burrá Sáheb's room, I saw Milk-and-Water waiting for me near my desk.

"This is an office of humiliation," he said; "see to what an office you have come with your eyes open. I dare say you were much better off where you were. But pray don't let this matter circulate like wild-fire in the office."

"Certainly not; don't think me so indiscreet."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SHOE QUESTION DISCUSSED—SOME OFFICE-MATES DESCRIBED. .

IN the office to which I now belonged, the East-Indian element was very strong, much stronger than the native element, and the new appointments of myself and my friend were regarded by the former class as a poaching on their preserve. The fact is, the Burrá Sáheb who

selected us had taken into his head the idea that the work of an Account-office could be done better by natives than by East-Indians, and we were especially selected to give his experiment a trial. The class of natives hitherto in the office belonged to the old school, though there were one or two among them worth more than they passed current for. Of the rest, one instance will suffice.

In going to the Burrá Sáheb, I of course always went with my shoes on. I was surprised one day to find another native assistant, of an equal status with myself, standing before the Huzoor with bare feet. When we both came out, he gave me a lecture on the disrespectfulness of my conduct in not taking off my shoes. I did not, however, see in what the disrespect consisted, and said that to my mind the disrespect was in going in with bare feet. This made him very angry, and he called together a committee of all the old native assistants of the office, who were unanimous in condemning me. I refused, however, to accept this decision.

"Has the Burrá Sáheb ever asked any of you to take off his shoes?"

"No; why should he? or how could he, when we never gave him the opportunity to do so?"

"Is there any order, written or verbal, requiring that shoes should be taken off?"

"None of recent date; but there was such an order in times past."

"Which has now become obsolete?"

"Well, not exactly. People who want to show their respect for the Burrá Sáheb always observe it still."

"It is just there that we differ, my friends. You observe the practice as a mark of respect. That doubtless was the view taken of the matter many years ago, when the order you refer to was passed; but it has long ceased to be so regarded by civilized men. At this day, they regard bare feet as a studied mark of disrespect, and it is for that reason only that we never pull off our shoes

"But suppose the Burrá Sáheb were to take notice of your recusancy?"

"Of course if the Burrá Sáheb orders me to take off my shoes, I shall do so. But I don't expect such an order, any more than I expect an order to pull off my trousers; and, in the absence of peremptory orders, I consider it more respectful to keep on both trousers and shoes, and shall continue to do so." They looked daggers at me, but I was not further molested.

The East-Indian assistants also were, for the most part, inimically disposed towards me; mainly because, as I have already stated, they thought that I had no business to be in that office at all; and, moreover, because I did not cave in to them as the other native assistants did. There were two exceptions among them, however, whom I cannot but remember with thankfulness. One was a literatus of some standing, who had made himself a name by his contributions to magazines and annuals. He welcomed me with open arms as a personal friend, though he had never known me before; helped me with his experience in the office, whenever I had occasion for such assistance; and proved himself every inch a gentleman, quite above every feeling of rivalry or class antipathy. The other was also an educated man, but not possessed of an equally good heart. He, indeed, sided with me, but only because I was the Burrá Sáheb's nominee, and he thought that the best and safest course for him to follow was to pull with the current with a good grace.

It is scarcely necessary to notice any more of my office-mates at this moment. They will doubtless, many of them, turn up in the course of the narrative, and I promise to depict each faithfully as he comes forward. As the Irish magistrate mentioned from the bench, I shall always take care neither to be partial nor impartial in dealing with them. I can say of them generally, what Johnson said of the Scotch—I don't hate them, nor do I hate frogs, though at times I am obliged to regard them as very unnecessary evils.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VISITORS AND OMEDWÁRS.

It will be understood from the notice I have taken of the treatment Mr. Milk-and-Water received from the Huzoor that the latter was not a man of a very even temper. He was nevertheless not a bad man : far from it ; taken all in all he was a very good man to work under, one who did his own work conscientiously, and always showed a liking for those of his subordinates who worked well. He took a particular fancy to me, gave me a room adjoining his own, and befriended me in divers ways on divers occasions. What he was most fond of was work, constant, unremitting work, without rest or respite ; and what he did not tolerate was being interrupted in his work. One day a smart young man, neatly dressed in Young Bengal fashion, with a new shawl turban and new patent-leather boots, came to see him. The usual glazed card was sent in, and the visitor sent for.

"Take a seat. What do you want ?"

"Come to pay my respects, sir."

"Very good ; but what else ? Is there anything particular that you want to be done for you ?"

"Yes, sir ; give me an appointment, sir."

"Why, Báboo, we are making no appointments now ; there are no vacancies to give away just at present. But you can send in your application, stating your claims."

"Yes, sir ; but will you give me a good appointment in the Department ; a fat, gazetted appointment, sir ?"

"I really can't say anything at present. I shall submit your application, when I receive it, to the Governor-General for orders."

"Very good, sir."

"Good morning to you, Báboo."

"Yes, sir."

"You can go now ; you see I am very busy."

"Yes, sir," again replied the Báboo, but without stirring from his seat.

"Do go, Báboo; will you?"

"Yes, sir," and he rose from his seat, but stood fast behind the chair.

"Well, what more do you want?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Then go, please."

"Yes, sir."

"My goodness! why don't you move?"

"Yes, sir."

Short Temper could hold out no longer. "Will you go or not?—*Qui hye, Báboo ko nekál dayo.*"

This, the reader will say, was an ignoramus, demeaning himself as ignoramuses will. Yes; just so; but unfortunately these ignoramuses are very plentiful in every grade of life, and bring a bad name on all natives generally. A Deputy Magistrate, while in a boasting mood, related to me how he had forced himself *volens volens* on the notice of a Judge of the High Court. He came to our office very early one morning, when I and a few other assistants only had dropped in.

"Hollo! Deputy Sáheb, what brings you here so early? Has there been any difficulty in passing your salary, or any mistake discovered in your accounts?"

"Oh! neither; I have just dropped in on my way back from Garden Reach, where I went to see Mr. —, the High Court Judge, at his residence."

"I suppose he receives visitors only in the morning?"

"Well, no; the fact is he receives no visitors at all. I called another day in the afternoon, and was refused. I asked his Jemádár when the Sáheb was comparatively idle, and learnt that he did nothing in the morning besides reading the newspapers, but that even then he did not receive visitors. I was determined, however, to see him, and went this morning. I sent in my card, and what does he do but write on it—'On what business?' I replied—'To pay my respects.' The *chapprássie*

brought back the usual reply—‘*Phoorsut nehi háye.*’ I did not know what to do. Shortly after I heard the Sáheb ordering his *ghárry*, and I waited for him at the landing-place. How was he to avoid me now? I stopped him just as he came down the staircase, and I kept him full one quarter of an hour standing there and talking to me. Nothing like perseverance, you know.”

“But had you anything particular to tell him? Did you know him before?”

“No, I did not know him before; nor had I anything particular to say. But I make it a point to call on all these great folks, and make friends. You don’t know when they may be of service to you.”

Can a character more despicable than this be conceived? Mind, the man was a so-called educated man, and held an honourable post in an honourable branch of the public service.

The Huzoor of the Account Department never refused to see any one. He had only no leisure for idle talk. Sensible visitors took the hint he always gave them. One idler, after a short interview, was told by him that he was very busy.

“I can call another day when you are less so.”

“Oh, Báboo, I am always very busy.”

This was enough for the person I refer to; he never came again: but the hint does not operate on others in the same way. One brave Rájáh in particular vexed the Huzoor out of his life. Him he could not well turn out as he did all meaner fry, and the fellow took advantage of this and came to him very frequently—every time with a new favour to ask. He compromised me, too, with the Burrá Sáheb to some extent. Seeing that I sat by myself so near to the Huzoor, he took me for his special favourite, and thought I might be able to help him; so, after seeing the Huzoor, he made it a point to see me. While in my room, he would often become so uproarious in his mirth as completely to upset the Huzoor’s equilibrium in the adjoining apartment, and the Huzoor thought me partly to

blame for encouraging his visits; though I, of course, could not have kept him out, even if I had tried to do so.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HUZOOR NO. 2 AND HIS FRIENDS.

THE Chief Accountant was a very good man; but Accountant No. 2 was the reverse. He hated natives, and was exceedingly foul-mouthed. I had nothing to do with him especially, the Burrá Huzoor having selected me as his personal scribe; and it was very fortunate that it was so, as I could not possibly have agreed with No. 2. He also had a favourite in the office, but that favourite was quite as afraid to approach him as anybody else; and even visitors were treated most rudely by him. My contiguity to the apartments occupied by the Huzoors enabled me to note all that passed in his room. During some vacation or other there was a rush of Mofussil officers "come to pay their respects" to the Huzoors. They easily found admittance to the Burrá Sáheb for short interviews; but the case was very different with No. 2.

"Hám jántá háye. Sállá lok ká choote millá háye. Bullo Sállá lok ko, hámára phoorsut nehi háye."

Of course this was between the Sáheb and his peons. If he had dared to abuse the officers in their hearing, he would have surely caught it, as doubtless some one or other would have had the courage to hand him up to the Government, and abuse is the last thing that the Government will tolerate. If I remember aright, some Mofussil officer was for such offence degraded and warned.

The friends of our No. 2 were also apparently of the same feather. One of them, in coming up the staircase, was accosted by a clerk of the office by mistake as a brother-assistant, with the cordial "Hollo! Robinson," and a slap on the shoulder. The Sáheb was running up

the staircase while the assistant was running downwards, and they found themselves looking at each other with very different feelings when one was at each extremity of the stairs. The assistant had already discovered his mistake, but was puzzled and did not know what to do. If he had only run up and apologized, there would have been an end of the matter. This he did not, and the irascible Sáheb, not receiving the apology he was expecting, ran downstairs, chased the assistant all over the first floor of the office, and gave him a tremendous caning. I don't blame the Sáheb much for this, for he was a young man then, and hot-blooded : but it ought to have occurred to him that the man who had slapped him on the shoulder as an office-mate could possibly have no object in doing so purposely, and must have done it by mistake. Fortunately for the Sáheb, the assistant he fought with was a short, puny fellow, who accepted the thrashing quietly. The result might have been different if he had had a hardier man to deal with, and therefore was the Sáheb's action exceedingly indiscreet.

CHAPTER XXV.

SUCCESS IN OFFICE AND OUT OF IT.

SHIRK work is the great secret of an account office, as probably of all other offices also ; and when the head man, like the Registrar I have described, does not understand his business, this is easily done. My cue from the commencement was to take up as much work as others chose to shirk, and I never had cause to regret this. Of course it was painful to be constantly grinding away, when others equally placed had plenty of leisure and holiday. But the day of reckoning came. The Burrá Sáheb saw what I did ; the experiment he had taken in hand had fully succeeded ; and I was rewarded to an extent for which there was no

precedent. Then arose a cry of rage and disappointment from all sides, and this took the shape of a round-robin remonstrance addressed to the Huzoor by all my seniors, some nineteen in number, whom I had superseded. But they had mistaken their man altogether. The Burrá Sáheb sent for all the recusants, returned their remonstrance to them, and said that, if it was not forthwith withdrawn, he would be under the painful necessity of dismissing the whole of them at once. Of course all this tumult did not make me a favourite in the office; but my success, such as it was, quite reconciled me to the discomfort of my lot. This, however, was the only promotion I ever received for many years, and, though I was never actually superseded, I saw people on all sides of me afterwards getting on better in life, and never could understand how I came to be left in the lurch. One thing I never did—I never cringed to any man for a favour.

The experiences I had in this office are of a varied character. Those who got out of it, I found, generally fared well in life; but those who stuck to it stuck in the mire. One European assistant left the office and became a horse-dealer in Australia, made a fortune there, lost the whole of it again—the d—l only knows how—came back to the office, left it again for Australia, where, when I last heard of him, he was said to be doing excellently well. Another European assistant was sent away for some fault, and became a tea-planter, and then an indigo-planter, and is now said to be worth some lakhs of rupees. A third assistant, an East-Indian, joined the Police Department, where he is doing exceedingly well. A fourth gave up his appointment to join his father's business of a hotel-keeper at a distant sanitarium, and is said to be worth plenty of money now. A good many others were pensioned off, of whom one has become a man of substance by private enterprise; another is doing still better by service under other masters, his perquisites being greater than his pay; and another is fighting with his wife, with whom he has all along been living a cat-and-dog life. Of the native

assistants, one went out with a fat appointment to the Mofussil, where he has earned well-deserved honours; another was most fortunate in obtaining a fatter appointment in Calcutta, to which he is still attached; a third, who held a very petty post in the Account Department, went out on a fortune-hunting expedition on his own account, was taken in favour by some silly up-country Ránee whose faith in a Calcutta Báboo happened to be implicit, fleeced her and her minor children handsomely, and came down laden with booty, the envy of gaping thousands! A fourth and fifth have died, one in the prime of life, both exceedingly regretted by those who knew them.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BÁBOO MÁDHUB DUTT.

THE office building was private property. It belonged to a millionaire, who used occasionally to call over personally to inspect it. I have immortalized a good many millionaires already in these pages, but this man was of so different a stamp that I am induced to foist him in also. We did not know each other personally before; but he came and introduced himself as well-acquainted with the seniors of my family. He was an old gentleman of very unostentatious manners; I may say, having about him almost the simplicity of a child. The race is dying out. We find very few men like him now. Of him an excellent characteristic story is told. He had a good *bazaár* which brought him a handsome income. Another rich Báboo set up a rival *bazaár* in the neighbourhood, with a view to break up the old *bazaár*. It is said of my millionaire that he thereupon went over personally to his own *bazaár*, and there accosted each dealer and fish-wife thus: •

“You see I am an old man—a very old man. You are all my children. I have two children at home; but all the

rest are here. Will you desert me, my children, in my old age? Has your father deserved this at your hands? If anything sits heavy on you, tell me of it and I will remove the oppression. Do you complain of anything—any misbehaviour on the part of my servants—any shortcomings of my own?”

They one and all said that they had no grievances to complain of; they one and all swore that they would never leave their old father's protection for all the new *bazaárs* that might be set up. Each dealer and fish-wife then received as presents, in ratification of the contract, a new cloth and sweetmeats. The rival *bazaár* had to shut up within a week.

Poor old man! He had perhaps no enemy in the world, and yet was not this man murdered? Of course I allude to the well-known Mádhub Dutt, who was killed on his way to his house at Chinsuráh from the railway station. The enigma of that story has not yet been explained. Justly or unjustly, suspicion looked askance in one particular direction; but no light whatever was thrown on the matter. It was supposed that one of his own *durwáns* was the selected agent for carrying out the crime, and this man, it is said, was afterwards traced to Lucknow, where he joined the mutineers and died sword in hand. But did that one man do the deed alone? Were there no accomplices? The mysteries of the Calcutta Police have yet to be unravelled.

The old man, as he came to me, had his *námamálá* in his hand, which he pattered as he chatted on. He was very happy, he said, at home. Of his two sons, the eldest had died some years ago; and that was his greatest grief. But Providence had toned down his sorrow. He spoke of his surviving son with the greatest affection. He loved to live at Chinsuráh, he said, because the place was so much quieter than Calcutta, and he wanted rest. Rumour had it that he was tied down to the spot by the silken meshes of an unorthodox love. Poor old man! Did he not pay too dearly for it? It

was when going to this lady-love that he was waylaid and murdered. By whom? Will that ever transpire? Years have passed over the crime. Is it yet to the profit of any man to leave the tale untold?

CHAPTER XXVII.

CALIGRAPHY—ITS DECLINE.

A DEPUTY Magistrate, flaunting a gold chain, introduces himself. An old copyist—a wag of the first water—is looking admiringly at the chain, with great affected simplicity. The Deputy Magistrate is much flattered, and asks condescendingly if the old man likes the chain.

“Oh! it is not that, sir! The chain is good enough; and the gold is very bright too. But I am looking at it so steadfastly because it explains the meaning of a word which I never understood before.”

“What word can it be, I wonder?”

“Oh! a very simple word, sir; or rather two words. At home, my youngsters, in conning over their spelling-book, constantly repeat the words,—‘a he-goat,’ ‘a she-goat.’”

“Well, how do those words concern my chain?”

“Why, sir,” asks the old man with the greatest simplicity in the world, “is not this a he-gote, and a she-gote too? Does it not answer as a *gote* (chain) both for yourself and your lady?”

The Deputy Magistrate was furious,—the copyist had run off.

The *keráni* referred to was a particularly impudent one, and presumed much on his age; but he was also very useful. He was both copyist and draftsman. A paper once came down to the office written in Arabic, which no one could read. Copies of the document were urgently wanted for circulation to Mofussil officers. This

copyist, without understanding a single word of the language, made copies of the paper so exact that, when they were submitted to competent examiners for verification, not a single mistake was found in them. To do this, perhaps, did not require much intelligence; but it certainly did require great precision of hand to copy stroke for stroke, without mistaking a single twist.

Of one assistant of the office—an East-Indian—it was said that a certain Governor-General, who wrote a very crabbed hand, having asked for a copyist who should be able to copy every letter correctly without being able to understand a single word, this man was selected, and did his work to his Excellency's satisfaction. For this qualification he drew a specially large salary, and when on a later day it was proposed to curtail the amount, he strongly protested against any reduction, urging clamorously that, though he did not understand much of accounts, he was the only assistant in the office who could copy correctly without understanding the text! The plea was admitted, and the salary spared!

Some of the old copyists wrote an excellent hand. In this respect the falling off in later times has become very apparent. The old letters of the office were always written in splendid characters; but now-a-days the pot-hooks are scarcely readable. This is observable also in other documents. Just look at an old Government Promissory Note, or, as it is now the fashion to call those papers, an old "*Government Security*." The writing on it looks like copper-plate; but the Promissory Notes of the present day have nothing like it to show. Even the signatures of the officers in past days—those of Messrs. Prinsep, Bushby, and Morley, for instance—were very clear and legible; while the signatures of the present time can scarcely be deciphered without a competitive reading examination among half-a-dozen men; and yet the papers in those days used to be signed by the highest officers of the Government, who did not consider it beneath their dignity to write a clear hand; while now the papers

are signed by mere Treasury clerks, who think it a shame to be able to write at all. I think that, like some millionaires I have mentioned, these gentlemen might simply put their mark on the papers with a × cross, and some subordinate assistant might then write underneath “Mr. So-and-so”—“his mark.”

Then the old records of the Government offices, how beautifully they were kept! The same virtue of splendid handwriting is observable throughout them all. They are, page after page, quire after quire, ream after ream, unmarked by a blot or an erasure, and are always easily read without any pain to the eye. Printing has come to the rescue of the present generation, and all the printed records of every public office are of course very decent; but such records as happen to be kept in manuscript, how shabby they are! And yet the copyists of the present day are paid more, much more, liberally than were those of the past.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PATRONAGE—HOW VACANCIES IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES ARE FILLED UP.

A NICE appointment—that is, for an uncovenanted officer—has become vacant. There are many candidates for it—one among them *par excellence* the best of the whole lot, being a man of education, station in society, and much official experience. Another candidate is a very young man, of no official aptitude whatever, but very well connected, and personally known to Sir Henry Hardinge, with whose daughter he has danced in England! Will you bet who wins the prize? The man of parts was sanguine, but did not get it.

Take another case. A new appointment is created in an office where proverbially there is little work to do. The pay is handsome, and there are three candidates, two

of whom would have graced any appointment. The third is illiterate, but has been of great service in divers unofficial ways (*e. g.* in procuring loans of money and the like) to the officer who has the nomination in his hands. The merits of all the candidates are well known. The great man's nominee gets the post; the fact being that it was created for him, with especially fat pay and no work, the admission of other candidates being all a sham.

The reader may say that this has been so from the commencement, and will be so to the end of time. Who knows of the golden age, when it was otherwise? True: but all this happens under the very nose of the Government; the nose gets the stink, and only tries to keep it off with 'kerchief and Eau-de-Cologne; the eyes are conveniently closed, the saint seems absorbed in prayer, and the thing is done. It would be a different matter if the Government were altogether ignorant of these doings; but can it conscientiously plead that it is so?

A third instance refers to an humbler appointment. An assistant applies for a vacancy in a higher grade. There are other applicants also, but he has long been recognised as the best of the lot. He goes to the head of the office for it, and is refused; the claims of one of the other candidates being preferred.

"Very good, sir! But I have always had the toughest job to do, while the party preferred has had comparatively lighter and easier work; you have yourself said so on several occasions."

"Yes, you are right; I have said so."

"Then I trust, sir, this will be mended now. Since he gets the promotion, it will be only fair to give him the more important duties."

"Oh! that's my look-out, not yours. I always apportion work according to the capabilities of my assistants. The question of pay has nothing to do with that."

It is useless multiplying instances. No deserving man in the public service can look above him without seeing

many inferior people hoisted far beyond his reach. He may feel aggrieved, but must expect no redress. He may wince; the withers of those in power are unwrung. One thing, however, he can do to regain his peace of mind. After looking up the ladder, he has only to look down; and if his mind be at all well regulated, he will at once see that there are many his equals, if not betters, occupying posts much lower than his own. The justice or the injustice of the thing need not be considered; it is not open for discussion or deliberation. There is the fact staring us in the face, and we must accommodate ourselves to it in the best way we can. Mr. So-and-so has got ahead of me most unjustly. Admitted; but similarly, you have got ahead of Báboos So-and-so, without possessing any higher merits. The beam will never get steady; the scales are constantly vacillating.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE NEW REGISTRAR.

THE old Registrar Sáheb has gone out, and a new Registrar Sáheb has come in. Is he a better man? No; certainly not better in respect to work, and infinitely worse in all other respects. Were there no better candidates to select from? Lots of them; but it is needless trying to discover the why and wherefore of such *con-tretemps*. A new broom must sweep. But he does not know what to sweep; so he sweeps away right and left, disorganizing everything, without understanding what he does disorganize. Many alterations are made by him—all slap-dash, without judgment or forethought. The most valuable cheques are vetoed and prohibited—new ones are ordered which answer no useful purpose. A flaming account is sent up to the Chief Accountant of the improvements carried out; and the zealous broom is

thanked in set phrase for having rescued the office from chaos and confusion. The whole world is a clap-trap, my masters, and we ourselves are the players in it !

Now, who is this new Registrar ? A very busy and energetic man he is, whose pretensions include all sorts of accomplishments, without real claim to any. He has dabbled in Greek and Latin, and is master of English, Scotch, Welsh, and Irish. Persian he pretends to ; Arabic and Chinese he promises to learn. He sings scraps of bawdy songs to exhibit his knowledge of poetry ; mouths and gesticulates, and strikes the table very hard with his fists to show that he is an orator ; and pretends to have taken lessons from my deceased friend, Rádhá Náth Síkdár, out of Laplace and Newton. It is sham throughout from top to bottom, and yet it is curious how men of education fail to detect the imposition. The man came out to this country with a wooden ladle in his mouth ; entered some flourishing concern in the very humblest capacity ; got on well enough there ; pretended to have mastered the business ; played his cards with great cleverness ; and behold his wooden ladle is converted into a silver spoon—or you may call it golden without exaggeration.

"I will put you in the way ; I will do everything for you," mutters the deputy to his head, in the vain hope of ingratiating himself in his good graces.

"All right !" says the head, and makes over all his work to the deputy, and himself goes about gadding—to great people, to small people, and where not ?

He remained in office long, very long indeed ; and if he had only taken the pains to learn his work, he would have been worth something. But this he never did. He talked big, crowed loud, slapped the table hard, stamped with his feet, and cursed and swore by Sodom and Gomorrah. The *peons* and *dufties* of the office quaked at those energetic demonstrations ; even *keránis* of the lower grades got funky, while those whom his arm could not reach laughed at him ; and yet this man had

long, very long, the reputation of being a very efficient Registrar—a man who did not know anything of work, and whose whole secret of administration was brow-beating.

The deputy who assisted him soon found out his mistake. He had angled very adroitly for favour, but never secured it. He got disappointed and less zealous; the head got disgusted and weary, and the deputy was thrown overboard without the slightest compunction. But who was to do the work now?—such mechanical duties as did devolve on a Registrar and could not be slurred over? He got a *dewán* Báboo to do it—a member of that caste which, rightly or wrongly, has the credit of being the most intriguing and mischievous. The fellow acted both as deputy and spy; they say that he did even worse, but of that I have no certain information. It is in this way that most people get on in life. Fools, and those who can't help it, work; knaves get their work done by others, and simply draw their pay.

CHAPTER XXX.

DEMOCRACY AND SEDITION.

A MILITARY Officer held his office in the same building with the Account Department, and, as he had plenty of leisure, he took a delight in coming over and breaking a lance with me as often as he could find time for it. The manner in which we became first acquainted was rather unpleasant. He had taken a fancy to the small room which I occupied, had asked for it from our Burrá Sáheb, and came to turn me out.

“Well, Báboo, how long have you occupied this room?”

“Nearly a year now.”

"But that has not given you any vested right to it, you know."

"Certainly not; do you want it?"

"Very much indeed; and what is more, Mr. — has told me to take it. So it all depends upon you whether you will give it up or not."

"I would have given it up to you even if Mr. — had not ordered it. I shall move out at once now, since he has told you to take it."

"Oh no! there is no particular hurry about it. You can move out when you like. I was obliged to speak to Mr. —, because hitherto the room had belonged to his part of the office."

The acquaintance thus commenced he took great pains to cultivate; and in all the banter and provoking discussions we had, I always found him a perfect gentleman. He one day came and asked me what my duties were, and tried to understand them, and then wanted to know what salary I received. All his inquiries having been answered, he coolly asked if I was not overpaid.

"Don't you think Rs. — too much for your duties?"

"Possibly, yes; taken in the abstract, the sum is large enough. But when I find that you are paid Rs. —, it then occurs to me for the first time that I am very much underpaid. Our duties are nearly similar; you have the military accounts, while I have those of the civil departments; and yet you get just eight times more than I do. Don't you think that to be somewhat unjust?"

The flush on his face was perceptible, but he covered it with a smile.

"I can get out a man from England," he said, "who would do your work for your pay."

"I have not the slightest doubt of it," said I; "but that would give no saving to the Government. I can nominate a native who will do your work for a fourth of your salary, or if the Government insists on having a European, I can at any moment pick out from the unofficial

ranks a countryman of your own, who will fill your chair as efficiently at least as you do for half the amount you draw." This was a settler, and he ever after called me a democrat.

He came back to the charge when the papers announced the death of the Advocate-General, Mr. Ritchie. "Can you give us a native who would fill up Mr. Ritchie's place?"

"No! I don't know any native, or any European civilian, or military officer either, who could take up his duties."

"So you see your country can't give us the men we want, and we must get out fit men from England."

"Just so, and my country is willing to pay handsomely for any available talent that England can lend her. What she complains of is that she has to feed so many drones too in the bargain."

"Meaning me and the like of me, I suppose?"

"Not particularly; but there may be parties whom the cap will fit."

"But you forget that we have conquered the country, and are entitled to everything in it as a matter of course."

"Possibly; but the country was lost by the Mahomedans, who had no inherent right to it. You did not fight the Hindus, and I contend that the Hindus have not forfeited their birthright."

"Ho! ho! Are you prepared to fight out for your birthright now?"

"Perhaps to say so would be treason; but when I hear every individual Englishman arrogating to himself the conqueror's right, and bragging of it, I am almost tempted to have a play at quarter-staff with him, if only to convince him that each Englishman individually is not necessarily a conqueror."

"We don't fight with quarter-staffs; we fight with guns and swords, which you don't know how to handle."

"Only because you have schools to teach their use to you; but an enlightened Government has not thought fit to set up such schools in this country yet."

"But if you had the schools, do you think there would be many volunteers to learn the art of fighting?"

"I can't answer that question exactly now, but I should say that there ought to be many pupils. The English are protecting us with great kindness,* but many people may nevertheless wish to learn to protect themselves. The occasion may arise when it would be of inestimable value to them."

"What occasion? Can you think of any?"

"Yes; England may get tired of the work of evangelizing India, and may give her up altogether some day when we least expect it, and then we are done for, only because the Government will not allow us to learn the use of arms."

"Oh! you need not fear that England will give up India in a hurry."

"Then there is the possibility of her being compelled to do so."

"Indeed! All of you natives seem to think that Russia can take India at any moment from us; don't you?"

"I don't. I can't answer for others, but I don't believe that either Russia, or France, or America, or any other nation whatever, can snatch India from England alone. One to one England is quite a match, and probably more than a match, for the strongest of them. But there may be a coalition against her, and then, with two or three strong powers opposed to her, no alternative would, perhaps, remain to her but to give up India."

"There is a deal of sense in what you say, but the purse of England is so long that of all powers in the world she has the least to fear from coalitions. No coalition against her could stand for six months; so you can rest quite satisfied that the protection of England will not be withdrawn from you. Is there any other reason why you want to have a military school?"

"Yes; the reasons for it are as plentiful as wild flowers. A military school would enable us to stand by and be of help to the English in the hour of need."

“Or to join the rebels in the event of another mutiny? Eh!”

“You don’t pay a compliment to Bengal. Bengal is too wide-awake for such folly.”

CHAPTER XXXI.

ABOUT FARMING AND THE MUTINY.

“I WONDER,” said the Colonel, “that, with such notions as you entertain, you came to serve the Government in such capacity as that of a *Keráni*.”

“What else could I do? Englishmen do not seem to see that the field for selection for us is a very circumscribed one.”

“Why, there are the professions open to you as to everybody else—Medicine, and the Bar.”

“The higher grades in both are not quite open to us; or rather require a visit to England, which is not very convenient to everybody.”

“Cultivation? Farming?”

“Yes; farming would pay handsomely. The thing is not understood in the country now, and if it were carried on fairly could not fail to be very remunerative. But you know the native objection to cattle-farming; we can’t rear to kill.”

“Fudge! nonsense! Why, my friend, at every *Poojáh*—excuse me that I use strong words—you kill most brutally and unnecessarily hundreds and thousands of cattle as hecatombs; and after that can you possibly feel any real compunction in slaughtering animals for the sustenance of human life?”

“You argue very strongly indeed. I cannot justify the prejudice; but, like many other anomalies, it does exist, and therefore is cattle-farming impracticable for an orthodox Hindu.”

"But you are not an orthodox Hindu, surely?"

"My seniors are, and I am bound to respect their feelings in the matter. Besides, if I did establish a good farm, would I not have many troubles along with it? Your indigo-planters have the bad name of making free with the crops of other people whenever they find it of advantage to them to act in that way. Will not European cattle-farmers of the same stamp rise up and try their hand at cattle-lifting on a wholesale scale?"

"Try their hand at cattle-lifting! Why, man, you threatened me with the quarter-staff the other day. Could you not make that ring in earnest on the head of a rival cattle-farmer? That is the way the Dandie Dinmonts settle such differences in my native land, and you must do likewise."

"Just so, and be perpetually in hot water, and perpetually bribing the *ámlikhs* of the law courts. The work would doubtless be very remunerative, but perhaps not very pleasant."

"You should go and live in Utopia then, if you want everything to be made very pleasant for you."

"I should indeed; only I don't know whereabouts it lies."

A very good man was the Colonel. He liked to provoke me to speak freely with him, and never betrayed the slightest impatience when I retorted; but on many subjects we thought alike. An assistant of the Account Office had accompanied Peel's brigade against the mutineers as a police-officer, I think. He brought back with him various articles as booty, such as gold and silver ornaments, silver-plate, shawls, brocades, velvet *chádurs* worked with gold, and the like. He held a market of them in the office, and many were the purchasers. I did not buy anything. This was observed, and the Colonel, who came in, asked why.

"I don't know, sir, how these things have been come by."

"Why, they have been taken from the mutineers red-handed, I suppose."

"Or possibly from people who were called mutineers that they might be plundered?"

"Now, now, that is very uncharitable, surely. Do you think that a party of Englishmen, with an educated, kind-hearted English officer at their head, could be guilty of such a dereliction of duty as that?"

"Well, I don't know what to say. The English officers in cold blood would do nothing so brutally unjust, I know; but they are demons when their blood is up, and this the mutiny has proved incontestably everywhere. People have been hanged and shot to death who were no more mutineers than you or I, and whose only misfortune was that they came across the avenging parties by accident. Just look here, Colonel; here is a nose-ring, an ornament used only by females. Do you mean to say that there were females fighting among the mutineers?"

"No; but the trinket was doubtless found among property belonging to the mutineers; how come by they knew best."

"Or may be it was torn off by the avenging army from the nose of some poor woman who did not know where to fly for protection."

"Ah! you are a poet, with a fine, vigorous imagination, and will doubtless give us your version of the mutinies in an epic by and by."

"Full of stories more dreadful than those told by Ugolino? No; the governors would not like anything of that sort coming from the governed. I should be set down as a mutineer myself if I attempted it. We must leave it to Englishmen to tell the story for us, and my confidence in Englishmen is so great that I have no doubt that, sooner or later, the tale will be most faithfully told."

"I thank you indeed for the compliment," said the Colonel; "you are the most queer native that I have known."

CHAPTER XXXII.

BEGGARS ON HORSEBACK.

SET a beggar on horseback and he will ride to the d—l, says the adage. True; but then who is to blame that he does ride so? Not the beggar surely, but he who places him on horseback.

There was such a beggar in our office—an Englishman of exceedingly rough manners. His antecedents are not known to me. He had been a schoolmaster, and was picked up for the office on being turned out from the school, under the impression that a pedagogue must necessarily be a dab at figures. They made much of him because he was English-born, though in reality his stupidity was as dense as granite. Besides this density he had some other recommendations. His partiality to the bottle once brought him into a serious scrape. He had been summoned to attend the High Court as a juror, and had there committed a nuisance—the cat may as well be let out of the bag—he had ***** in the jury-box. The Judge was furious; but after a severe lecture he contented himself by imposing a fine of Rs. 50, if I remember aright. This was the man, sirs, who found favour with an Accountant imported from the deserts of Cobi; and they made him—well, never mind what they made him; they placed him on horseback.

He was an altered man at once. No one who spoke to him without a preface of three *salaáms* was ever looked at. He issued orders after orders like the Czar of Russia, and the assistants subordinate to him had to codify these, and append to them an alphabetical index for prompt reference. Written replies to his questions not submissively worded were returned as incomplete and impertinent; verbal replies were arrogant if not interlarded with the word “sir” after every five words. One day an assistant *not* subordinate to him was going down the

staircase when he was coming up. The assistant, though a nigger and on small pay, had made no *salaám*.

"You there, why don't you make your *salaám* to me? Do you know who I am?"

"Yes, I know you very well; but there is no *salaáming* order in force in this office."

"Will you make your *salaám* to me, or not?"

"I shall consider and let you know."

"Will you make your *salaám* now, on the spot?"

"No, I won't."

"Very well, sir; that will do."

The eyes threatened; but the threat did not fructify. Perhaps the gentleman from Cobi who had placed the beggar on horseback was ashamed to back him in such a ridiculous squabble; and so the matter dropped.

Scenes equally ridiculous are acted almost every day in all the Government offices generally, there being no lack of indigent equestrians in any of them. One fellow, an East-Indian, but placed in authority, enters a room where he finds a poor clerk, who has just come to office quite weary, seated on his chair. The clerk had not risen from his seat; why should he? he is occupying his own seat, and is doing, or is about to commence, his own work.

"Why don't you rise from your seat when I come in?"

What is the man to do? His position does not allow him to ask in return, why he should? He is therefore obliged to render the homage required of him.

I remember having once witnessed a different scene, which I record here with pleasure. A native assistant used to wait in the portico every day till the head of the department, a European, came to office, when he would make him three humble *salaáms* and then go about his work. This went on for some days without any remark. At last the great man could hold out no longer. He sent for the assistant into his own room, and asked him why he *salaámed* to him in that manner every day. "Either you take me for an ass whom you fancy you can easily buy over by your meanness, in which case you are a knave;

or you are an ass yourself and do not know what you are about. Now take care that I do not catch you at this trick again; for if I do, I will degrade you."

Another scene of a different sort may also come in here for want of a better place to put it in. One European Registrar was a little deaf, and used always to place his open hand behind the ear when listening to anything attentively. A native assistant took it into his head to imitate him in this, possibly expecting that that would please the great man. He found out his mistake soon.

"God d—n you, sir," exclaimed the pious Registrar; "why do you put up your hand in that way? I do it because I am deaf; you are not deaf, you blockhead."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THIS PICTURE AND THAT.

I HAVE depicted some drunkards before. I shall here give the life of another representative specimen of the class. Judoo was the son of a poor widow, and was known from his earliest days as a very nice young man. Fathers singled him out as a model for their children to imitate. "He has nobody to look after him, yet see what a good boy he is reckoned at school. If you can only be like him, I would be fully satisfied." Such, or similar, were often the confidential exhortations of many a parent to his son. This young man, the pride of his mother, in whom all the affections of her widowed heart were centred, left school with credit, got into a Government office, and for a long time pursued a steady and exemplary life. Promotion follows steadiness—at least often, if not always; and Judoo got on pretty well in life—very well indeed for one of such poor parentage. Unfortunately he got into an office in which there were pickings to get besides pay, and these fluctuating additions to his income

undid him. The d—l's fee does not come in for nothing. It was something distinct from his salary, and did not find a place in his regular accounts. How was the money to be spent? He was no longer a young man now; the hoyday of life had already gone by: but the man who had been strict in his morals in his youth, now that he was the father of several children, was not ashamed to frequent the shops of infamy. One crime brought with it another; the company he had chosen could only be endured under the fumes of brandy or usquebaugh; the bottle therefore stepped forward where it was so absolutely needed.

And now he found his perquisites too small to keep pace with his habits. There was first his light-o'-love to maintain; and next a supply of spirits and necessary accompaniments to be found every night for self, her, and such others, her friends, as she chose to bring in. The pickings in the office could not cover all this expenditure. The comforts hitherto allowed to wife and children began therefore to be curtailed. But still ways and means did not square; debts began to accumulate, and the interest that had to be paid for them only made the difficulty still greater; the consumption of liquid fire began also to increase, and at last the office accounts were tampered with, which upon discovery was visited with dismissal.

Income and pickings both gone, how was this man now to live? The widow-mother died broken-hearted; the wife from comparative comfort descended to wretchedness; the children were utterly neglected, and grew up corrupt almost from their youth; while their father dangled after the rich, helping them in their vices, and living on their charity. Was brandy given up? No. One son was killed in a brawl in an empty-house; another convicted of burglary and imprisoned. Fearful was the visitation of the Most High! Do we always read them aright?

As a counterpart to this picture I shall give that of another widow's son, who started life under still poorer

circumstances. Yes, this widow was very poor indeed; she went from house to house in her neighbourhood to collect for her son, perhaps for herself also, the leavings of rice and curry in the kitchen; and also for torn clothes and torn shoes! Her son received no education—absolutely none; all her exertions were barely able to keep body and soul together; and when he had become a big lubberly boy, he entered the engineering school. Very little scholastic attainments were required in those days for the study he selected; he learnt his profession well. Even at that time he was propped up by the collections of food and clothing made by his mother from house to house. On one occasion she came to me with a most woeful countenance to say that her son must go to school barefooted unless I could give her a pair of old shoes. He is now an assistant-engineer, I believe, and contemplates giving up the appointment, to open out a professional career for himself independent of state support.

Take another instance. A young widow with two children, a boy and a girl, came to Calcutta from the Dofussil to see what could be done for them. She took service with a rich family as a menial-servant, worked with extra zeal to win favour, and succeeded. Her boy was taken in hand by the head of the family, and received an education along with his own children. He benefited by it sufficiently to be able to retain a good appointment which his patron's exertions obtained for him, and was in time able to secure a fortune and position for himself.

These instances are not ideal. In the first case the bottle seared up all the promises of early life. In the second and the third, the opening prospects were not half so hopeful as in the first; but Áhriman was not allowed admittance, and the design of Áhoormazd bore fruit.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE LAST.

As an assistant in favour, I had occasionally to dance attendance on the higher covenanted officers of the department at their private residences, and this gave me an opportunity to observe their modes of living attentively. It is well known that they all live in grand style when their families are with them; but I observed that when the Mem Sáheb was away they lived very poorly indeed. Of one gentleman the sleeping cot was more wretched than the one I use, nor had he more than half-a-dozen chairs in his house, the whole furniture of which was as ricketty as could well be conceived. Nor was his an isolated instance. Altogether, it seems to me that the native mode of living is, on the whole, not less expensive than the English mode *minus* Mem Sáheb's expenses on finery, education of the children in England, and the cost of wines. The beef and the *moorgee* may cost a trifle more than fish and vegetables; but the waste of cooked food in native families is something awful, as each member is served separately, and what remains on the platter of one cannot be transferred to that of another, nor taken back into the kitchen. Perhaps not less than one-fourth of the food cooked comes thus to be thrown away. The cost of clothing would probably on both sides be also found to be equal, or nearly so. It is true that the Báboo goes about half-naked. But his shawls, and *pugrees*, and *kincohs* cost a deal more than the shirts and coats of Mr. Brown; and, even including Mem Sáheb's finery, the gold and silver trinkets of Gokool Moni run up the expenses of Rám Bose to a very heavy amount. Of course old Brown has to pay a large sum of money for house-rent, while Rám Dádá occupies the little fort his ancestors built a few years after the flood, on which he has never laid out more than

Twenty rupees a year in repairs. • But the original outlay on Castle Dangerous must have been pretty considerable, and the interest on that money, if it does not quite come up to the monthly disbursement of Brown, is still a good set-off against it. Brown's expenditure on wines must be considerable, against which Rám Churn, if orthodox, has nothing to show beyond the eight annas a month he pays for his tobacco ; but his hopeful, Mr. Bose, promises to run up the account under this head in a short time ; and then the accounts will probably be squared on both sides, provided the present practice of Rám Bose, Siboo Bose, and Hurro Bose congregating together under the same roof, is simultaneously abandoned. The go-a-head generation is fighting hard for an equality, and will have it—in respect to expenses at least. They already call their thrifty fathers "pigs," classing themselves doubtless under the head of "monkeys." The pig has the reputation of being a stupid animal, and the monkey that of a devilish clever one ; but naturalists will observe that species vary.

I have spun out these reminiscences much longer than I intended. A contribution of this nature can, of course, be protracted to any length ; but I am very averse to take advantage of that circumstance. Enough, says the adage, is *as good* as a feast ; my comment on the text is that enough is *better* than a feast, and, as the reader has had enough of my notes and lectures, our parting for the present is well-timed.

SHUNKUR:

A TALE OF THE INDIAN MUTINY OF 1857.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONSPIRATORS.

THE whole of India is more or less studded with temples and sacred edifices, some of which are beautifully situated either in the midst of thick groves or on the rugged summit of dark mountains, to which numerous pilgrims from all parts of the country come loaded with offerings, in all seasons of the year. An antique building of this description, not utterly destitute of architectural elegance and proportion, was to be seen some twenty years ago on the banks of the Ganges, at about an equal distance between Bithoor and Cawnpore, surrounded on three sides by gardens of singular beauty, while the river washed its base on the fourth. The building was of a very chaste design, and was dedicated to the worship of Mahádeva or Arghanáth, whose image in black stone was cherished within it. The grounds around were extensive, and sprinkled with groves of banian-trees, which concealed from observation numerous other edifices appertaining to the temple, and also gave shelter to hosts of pilgrims from the noonday heat. The *mohunt*, or *sabáit* of the god, was an old man, who had counted more than sixty summers, but still retained a tall and upright form. His head and beard were grey, but his eyes were bright and piercing almost as those of youth, and gave fearful significance to a countenance that was peculiarly ill-

boding. But the man had, nevertheless, a great reputation for sanctity, and the rich men of the neighbourhood vied with each other in showing him respect.

In India the hot season commences with March. It was on the eve of a rather sultry day of that month, in the year of Christ 1857, that two men were to be seen sauntering near the precincts of the temple, under the banian-groves, almost in moody silence, or occasionally exchanging a few words with each other, as if afraid to speak out their minds more freely. One of them was the priest we have described; the other was a younger middle-sized man, with a stout frame, a round pock-marked face, and very intelligent but ill-expressed eyes. He was dressed more like an English gentleman than a Hindu, in tight trousers and a brocaded caftan, while he flourished an ivory-mounted sword-stick in his hand. The evening was very tranquil; the sun had recently set, and already a beautiful moon, such as is only to be seen in the tropics, was in the sky, piercing through the sombre shadow of the trees, and flooding the broad breast of the river below with her soft and silver radiance. The spot and the hour were in fact well-suited for the purpose which had brought the two men together; and they were impatiently waiting for the arrival of others whom they expected, and a frown was already gathering on the face of the younger man at their delay.

"Our friends are laggards, and it is not safe to have loiterers to deal with in such affairs," said the younger man.

"You have reached the place of assignation sooner, prince, than was agreed upon," quietly expostulated the priest.

"What then? Should they not have come here earlier than me? But I am unreasonable. What company have you got in the temple to while away the time?"

"If you mean girls, we have none there to-night. But I can send for the barber's pretty wife who pleased you so much, if you want her."

"Pooh! the lion does not feast on the same carcass twice; if you want to please me you must get me a new mistress every time."

"There will be no difficulty in that, I assure you. But, prince, your orders for privacy to-night were strict, and no arrangements of the kind have therefore been made."

"You are right, Thákoorjee. There is no time for love-making now; and I think our laggards have arrived at last."

Some heavy steps and the rustling of fallen leaves showed that the conjecture of the prince was correct, and immediately after two figures emerged from the trees that were nearest, and stood before them. The first of these was a slim young man, of a dark olive complexion and rather prepossessing appearance, dressed after the manner of the East, with much finery and gold. The other was a stout, thickset man of about fifty, having more the appearance of a Cossack of the Ukraine than of a native of Hindustán; dressed like a respectable Mahomedan, but exhibiting an appearance decidedly unprepossessing, of which the most prominent features were high cheek-bones, small restless eyes, and a frame indicative in all parts of great personal strength.

We may as well introduce to the reader the several characters before him. The prince was no other than Náná Dhoondoopunt, *alias* Náná Sáheb, the notorious hero of the Cawnpore atrocity, a man of great intelligence, who could read and write English, and who lived like an English gentleman, a good deal by the cover side. He was the adopted son of Bájee Ráo, ex-Peishwá of Poona, and his grievance against the British Government was that the pension of £80,000 paid to the Peishwá, was not continued to him. His means were ample, all the private wealth of the Peishwá having been inherited by him; and he lived in the Peishwá's castle at Bithoor, just ten miles west of Cawnpore, having a personal retinue of two hundred armed men, with three guns, quite independent of British authority. The priest of the temple was Náná's

pimp, astrologer, and confidanté. "The young Mahomedan was Ázimooláh Khán, who represented the Mahomedan interests in the councils of Bithoor, had proceeded to the Crimea, during the Russian War, to see with his own eyes the relative strength of England, France, and Russia, and had come back impressed with a very unfavourable opinion of English pluck and energy. The heavier Mussulman pretended to represent some foreign power, though he was accredited by none; but it was his advice and directions that gave a plan and system to the Sepoy revolt of 1857.

CHAPTER II.

THEIR LAST CONFERENCE.

THE evening was deepening into night when the conspirators sat down at their place of rendezvous, under the shadow of the banian-trees.

"I have not failed you, prince," said the thickset Mussulman, opening the conference.

"I am glad you have not," said Náná. "We must come to some definite understanding without further delay."

"Yes; we have lost considerable time already, but it was not my fault. I understood that both you and the Khán Báhádoor had proceeded on a pilgrimage, and were absent from the country."

"A very holy pilgrimage it was on which we went—a Mahomedan and a Hindu together! You are dying to know all about it. We visited all the military stations along the Grand Trunk Road as far as Umbállá, to gauge the feelings of the troops located in those places."

"And what was the result?"

"Ask the Khán Báhádoor; he will tell you," said the Náná, looking sulky and overcast.

BENGALIANA.

Ázimooolláh, who was thus appealed to, seemed indisposed to give any direct reply, and at last only said that the prospects were not very pleasing, but that he still hoped for the best.

"Nay, speak out, Ázimooolláh," said Náná, "and tell the blunt truth at once. You need not fear to hurt my feelings. I wish you joy and success in your career; but if they won't have me, why I can seek my fortune alone."

"Bless me, if I understand a word of all this!" observed the Mussulman who had opened the conference. "Who will not have you? Who are the parties who can do without you?"

Náná replied not, while Ázimooolláh Khán looked embarrassed, and turned uneasily on his seat; but the priest now broke silence, and stated how the case stood. The troops at every station had refused to make Náná their leader. Even those at Cawnpore, among whom he had spent large sums of money, would not rise except for the old king of Delhi.

"That is all a mere excuse, you know," said Náná. "The men have no stomach for the big work we proposed to them. They are afraid of that rotten power of which the English brag so much."

After this there was a long pause in the conversation, which was at last broken by the thickset Mussulman.

"Ever since I came to this country," said he, "I have made many inquiries far and wide in respect to the feelings of the army, and my conviction always has been that their disaffection to the Government is very general. The discipline of the army is lax. All the sepoy complain everywhere of unnecessary restrictions imposed upon them. The arrogance of the young officers is represented as insufferable. The subadár-major who has fought twenty battles is treated contemptuously and spoken of as a 'nigger' by the young lieutenant who has barely learnt to flaunt his epaulettes before the ladies. The slowness of promotion is everywhere complained of, and also the limited nature of the rewards open to the really good

soldier. The army, in fact, is thoroughly disorganized; the little consideration shown for the feelings and caste-prejudices of the men has spread disaffection everywhere; and I cannot but believe that the troops in every place are quite ripe for a revolt, and would rise up to a man under a proper leader."

"And who should that leader be?" broke out Náná in great petulance. "The attenuated old man of Delhi, or the bastard of Lucknow? For whom must Náná of Bithoor, the son of Bájee Ráo, make way? Point out a worthy man to replace me, and I recede at once. But ask me not to fight for a boy of fourteen, whose mother goes nightly to bed with a paramour; or for a diminutive old dolt whom another boy calls father, while his mother undisguisedly attempts daily to fly out of the palace, and speaks of her husband as a nasty cross old man, with whom she is heartily disgusted."

"But we don't ask you to fight for either, prince, but only for yourself," said Ázimoolláh. "The pith of the matter is easily understood. The sepoys will not rally except around the old king. Why should we not make use of his name to bring them out? I, though a Mahomedan, am not very enthusiastic in the cause either of Jummá Bukht or his father. The latter is too old to make a good king, and the character of the mother of Jummá Bukht will always leave his birth doubtful; besides which, he does not give any indications of future fitness. Huzrut Mul, the Begum of Oude, notwithstanding her passion for Mummoo Khán, I regard with admiration. I respect her courage and energy, and for her sake would befriend the cause of Birjis Kádder, her son. But my devotion to the Mahomedan interests will never blind me to the fact that there is only one man in all India, and that man a Hindu, worthy to become leader in this great emergency, and I make it no secret that my only wish is to bring to him all the support which the Mahomedans throughout the empire can afford."

"You speak fair, Khán Báhádoor, and I believe you," said Náná; "but if the troops marshal only under the

banner of the old king, they will surely proclaim him Emperor of all India after the fighting work is over."

"And that much," said Ázimooláh, "you must concede to him. The Mahomedan rule immediately preceded that of the English, and must be restored; but the Hindu power was also dominant over a large part of India, which only owned nominal allegiance to the Moslem, and that power will rest in your hands. Is not that a cause worth fighting for?"

Náná was silent for a time, and then asked gently,—
"Is that your scheme?"

"Yes," said Ázimooláh, "that is the scheme which the Mahomedans all over the country will support; namely, that the kingdom be divided, and one part of it be given up to the Hindus to rule over, and the other part taken possession of by the Mahomedans, the puppet at Delhi retaining a nominal supremacy over all. You have only to say now whether you will accept or reject this scheme."

"And look you here, prince, into this map," said the Mahomedan akin to a Cossack; "it has been prepared by my master, and defines clearly the partition he proposes between the Mahomedans and the Hindus, to set all quarrels for the future at rest. All the land here marked green, from the Nermuddá river to Cape Comorin, will own the futuro Peishwá of India as its sovereign lord, who might only send some elephants annually to Delhi in token of amity and affection. All the land marked yellow, from Ágrá to Cáchár, will similarly belong to the sovereign of Lucknow, who will also acknowledge a nominal fealty to the throne of Delhi. The rest of the country, marked blue, which is the smallest portion of the three, will belong immediately to the Emperor of Delhi, who will, in addition to it, be recognised as the lord-paramount of all India."

"The Mahomedan to be lord-paramount again!" murmured Náná Sáheb sulkily, unwilling to reject the scheme wholly, and still averse to accept it as it stood.

"It was so before," said Ázimólláh, "and must be so now; but the dominions allotted to the Peishwá by the partition are larger than ever were owned by any Hindu sovereign in any age."

There was a dead pause again, which no one seemed anxious to break. At last Náná turned slowly to the Cossack-looking Mussulman, and said, "You say your master has chalked out this partition for us. Does he guarantee our possession to each?"

"You know already that you have my master's cordial moral support in this matter. Material support he will not render till there is interference against you on the part of other foreign powers. The English you must fight alone, and pitch them back into the seas they came from. If any other power comes to their aid, or pounces on India, or on any portion of it, after them, my master will support your cause heartily with arms."

"I understand. He will assist us when we don't want his assistance," returned Náná, with a grim, sarcastic smile; but he changed his tone immediately after, and added, "but perhaps your master means kindly, and it is ungracious to push back the hand that is loyally offered. We may require his aid hereafter, and he alone could aid us thoroughly against the Afgháns. Tell your master that I accept the partition he has made, and only do so because he has willed it. Otherwise Náná Dhoondoopunt would have been at the bottom of the river below before he had conceded the lord-paramountship of India to a Mahomedan."

So ended the last great conference of the conspirators before the mutiny broke out.

CHAPTER III.

THE QUIET VILLAGE.

THE village of Soorájpore stood on the banks of the Ganges at a distance of about thirty miles from the city of Cawnpore. It had nothing peculiar to distinguish it from other Indian villages of the same kind except this, that the huts in it were generally built with a reddish ferruginous clay, which gave them a cleaner appearance than huts built of dark mud present in other places. They were most of them thatched with bamboo and straw, though not a few were also to be found roofed with tiles. The village was altogether a poor one, the richest family having scarcely more than three or four huts, exclusive of a cooking-hut, a storehouse, and a cow-shed. Throughout the entire village there were only two houses built of brick, namely, one which belonged to a retired Subadár, and the other a small round temple dedicated to Káli, the wife of the Great Destroyer. The houses of the villagers were all contiguous, or nearly so, and the streets leading to them, though narrow, were for the most part straight and clean.

The month of May is a very hot month in India, when the winds breathe fire, and cause both flowers and verdure to droop and wither. But it is nevertheless not without its enjoyments, and as a rule the Hindu is very partial to his festivals, and enjoys them heartily whenever they come round. One of the most brilliant fêtes of the season is that held on account of the *Dasahárú*, or *Gungá Poojá*, which generally comes in about the end of the month, or at the commencement of June. The crowds that assemble on the occasion are immense throughout all the Gangetic provinces, and it is a rare sight to see them proceed to the river-side to offer their oblations to the goddess Gungá, and purify themselves in her sacred waters. The processions of women are particularly interesting. Most of the

fair ones go loaded with ornaments ; but their garments conceal everything—their own fair persons and the trinkets they wear ;—and the eye only sees forms veiled like Grecian statues in their graceful drapery, toddling forward with each other's support. while the ear is charmed with the tinkling of their ornaments, mingled with their merry but suppressed laughter, and accents peculiarly soft and sweet.

It was a galá-day in the little village of Soorájpore, and the villagers enjoyed it with hearty good-will. The amusements were of diverse kinds, though not characterized by any great display of physical energy. There was plenty of singing and gossiping ; and the usual diversions of a country-fair were not wanting. Many good people were also pleasing themselves by making what is elsewhere called “ an April fool ” of each other in diverse ways ; and gambling, the vice of half-cultivated minds in all countries, was being indulged in with patient tranquillity. Festivity, like grief, however, has also its end, and by the time the sun had declined in the west the Poqjáh processions were all terminated, and the idlers in the streets were breaking up, and each man and woman going about his or her ordinary avocations.

At the door of one of the cleanest ranges of huts a half-naked lad of eight years was, at this time, playing and singing with the boisterous merriment of his age. He was a fine stout boy for his years, and beside him sat a modest matron of about five-and-twenty, evidently his mother, the general contour of whose figure gave indications that her pretensions to beauty were not inconsiderable. Very little of her person was to be seen, as the cloth she wore was wrapped two or three times round the body, one end of it being fastened to the waist, while the other passed over the head, shoulders, and bosom, and then fell in front almost as low as her feet. But a curious observer might still have detected glimpses of a fine luscious face, beautiful dark eyes, and well-tapered limbs, albeit the skin, though polished as velvet, was only dark-

brown. Not very far from this matron was an older woman, of about five-and-fifty, whose general resemblance to her daughter was too great for their relationship to each other being mistaken. Both these females, who had completed the religious observances of the day earlier than others, were now busy with their household work—cleansing rice and pulse for their homely fare; and, intent on their own occupation, they scarcely observed the proceedings of laggard revellers in the street.

“No business to-day, no work of any kind. This is a holiday; enjoy it, lads and lasses, while it lasts,” bawled out one lusty fellow, who was imitating the gestures of a Yogi, and had smeared his face with ashes, and was scattering mud and dust all round at his comrades.

“Hush! hush! There comes a Sowár on a great horse; I wonder wherefore, and to what end?” observed another of the party.

“The man wears the uniform of the great Rájáh of Bithoor. What can be his errand in this quiet place of ours?” spoke a third with alarm.

All eyes were now directed towards the horseman, who, coming up to the group, halted abruptly, and asked if any one would give him shelter and rest in the village till the following morning. The request was received in silence and with surprise. Even at this time the name of Náná was always spoken of with fear for miles around Bithoor, and no one wished to harbour any of his retainers for the briefest period, though they were all afraid to say so. The equestrian was tall and well-shaped, but very old. He nevertheless retained his seat on horseback well, and seemed inured to all the privations of active service.

“Well, bumpkins,” said he, “must I ask again whether any of you will house me?”

“You have not told us yet,” said one of the villagers, “whence you come and whither you are bound.”

“That, my friend, is my business, not yours,” said the man proudly. “You know from my dress and bearing

that I follow the lead of the Rájáh of Bithoor. Will any of you, for his sake or mine, give me a night's shelter, for I ask no more?"

"Ah, sir! we are all very poor people here," was the reply of the village spokesman; "we have scarcely more than a hut for each family, and certainly no decent bed for a gentleman like you. If you will only pass on to the brick-built house there, which is called the Subadár's Castle, you will doubtless receive such reception as you are entitled to, and as we cannot afford."

"Oh! as to that," said the horseman, "any manner of reception will do excellently well for me, and these clean huts before us will fit me better, I think, than any brick-built house where two old soldiers, the Subadár and I, may perhaps be wrangling before the space of an hour is over."

It is not customary with Hindu females, even of the humbler ranks, to speak to strangers, and when the two women heard of the preference expressed by the equestrian for their huts they whispered to the boy, who represented the male part of the family, to say bluntly that, as the master of the house was not present, they could not possibly make room for a stranger in it.

"Ha! my young friend, an excellent moss-trooper will you make before many years are over. But wherefore do you reject me? Do I frighten you? See, I am an old man," and he took off his *pugree* to exhibit his grey hairs. "Neither you, nor your mother, nor your grandmother need be afraid of me; and a night's shelter to a retainer of Náná Sáheb will secure you, my young man, such service in time as all your compeers here will envy."

The women, however, would not agree to the arrangement proposed; and their neighbours interfered to urge that it was unusual and unseemly."

"Be it so, ladies; I was not about to make love to you: and if you good bumpkins here cannot house me somewhere amongst you all, I must, I suppose, press on to the Subadár's residence."

And so it was eventually decided ; for the villagers one and all declined the honour of accommodating a man so suspicious-looking as the old equestrian, whom the reader will perhaps have already recognised as the priest of Arghanáth, and the confidanté of Náná Sáheb.

CHAPTER IV.

AT CÁWNPORE.

THE emissary of Náná Sáheb left Soorájpore early on the next morning, and during the whole of that day there was nothing to be heard in the village but surmises as to his errand and destiny. The old Subadár with whom he had lodged was glum, and nothing could be got out of him but hints of vague rumours being afloat that Queen Victoria had ordered the wholesale conversion of the natives of India, by compelling the Mahomedans to feed on pork, and the Hindus on beef for one week. The greatest indignation was of course expressed on all sides that an order so outrageously arbitrary should have been issued ; there were several who did not believe in it ; but others who did gave out further that the army, which alone had refused to submit to it, had been already directed to be disarmed and disbanded : and the faith of those believers was fearfully confirmed by the news which reached the village in the evening, that the troops stationed at Meerut and Delhi had broken out in revolt.

“Has this really occurred ?” was the inquiry on all sides.

“Hush ! don’t speak of it aloud,” said the old Subadár, “but the news is true. The English troops in India have received peremptory orders to cram down beef and pork into the mouth of every native, whether in service or out of it, and all who resist are to be hanged or shot.”

The alarm was now general, though there were still some infidels who shook their heads in disbelief. "The English Government," these said, "has never betrayed such despotic earnestness on behalf of its own creed before. Why should it do so now?" To quiet such doubts came in the prompt reply that the Queen of England had dreamed a dream, in which she had talked face to face with Áhriman, the author of evil, who had threatened her with grave threats if all her subjects were not given up to him through the impious rite of baptism that he had established. And the news spread like wildfire through the country, from village to village, from the fisherman's cottage to the *kothee* of the Tehsildár.

The news of the outbreak at Meerut and Delhi reached Cawnpore on the 14th of May. At that time the European force at Cawnpore consisted of fifty-nine artillerymen and six guns, fifteen men of the 1st Madras Fusiliers, sixty men of H.M.'s 84th Regiment, and seventy men of H.M.'s 32nd Invalids; while the native troops consisted of the 2nd Regiment of Light Cavalry, the 1st, 53rd, and 56th Regiments of Infantry, and the Golundáuzes, or native gunners, attached to the battery. Besides the European force, the European population in cantonment included many civil officers and merchants, almost the whole of the soldiers' wives of H.M.'s 32nd Regiment, and many children, the total number amounting to about seven hundred and fifty souls. Great fears were necessarily felt in respect to the feelings of the native soldiery on the spot, though all the officers believed that, even if the men did break out, no attempt would be made by them to hurt or molest the Europeans.

"Would they harm us, the brutes, if they rise?" asked Mrs. Quinn, in alarm.

"No," said Mrs. Burney. "The sepoy is not so bad as that, you know. The fact is I don't believe that our sepoys here will rise at all. Captain Green has perfect confidence in the loyalty and fidelity of his men, and heard with great pain the proposal to disarm them."

"That's my idea, too," said Mrs. Burke; "and Private O'Connor was telling my husband that he saw many of the suspected men crying bitterly at the want of confidence shown towards them."

"It is only the scoundrels of the *bazaar*, I suppose," remarked Mrs. Hussy, "that give out these idle reports. But our old brigadier is a brick, and is not likely to do anything in a funk."

"And besides that," said Mrs. Cullen, "we have a firm and stanch friend in Náná Sáheb, who is the *de facto* ruler of these parts, you know; and he is a knight without reproach or shame. He would not allow us to be harmed, any more than he would suffer his old mother at Bithoor to be roasted."

"Oh! if the old general would only send for Náná," said Mrs. Macgrath, "and ask him to look after the station, how very safe we would all feel amidst these disquieting doubts!"

Despite these expressions of hope and confidence, however, there was a general sense of depression all over the station. The European merchants and others even went so far as to provide themselves with boats and other means of escape, but afterwards abandoned the idea of deserting the place, on being assured that, even if there was an outbreak, all that the native troops would attempt to do would be to possess themselves of the money lodged in the treasury, and then march off to Delhi to join the sovereign who had been there proclaimed.

"Now don't be alarmed, my dear," said Mr. Tape to his better-half; "the general is preparing an entrenched camp for us all, and the commissioner is laying in a supply of *áttá*, *dál*, *ghee*, and rum, calculated to last for three months for a thousand souls, so that even if the black devils become really mischievous, they will find us fully prepared." And so all determined to stay where they were. After this who shall refuse to believe in destiny?

CHAPTER V.

AT BITHOOR.

WE hasten now to the castle of Bithoor, within which, in a lofty apartment adorned with a profusion of chandeliers and mirrors, sat on a high-raised velvet cushion a grand sphinx-faced old woman, of a calm, stern aspect, the putative mother of Náná, and queen-dowager of the Mahrattás, as the people of the castle called her. She sat alone, her broad, lofty brow furrowed and full of thoughts; she had a rosary in her hand, and was turning the beads listlessly.

A light step approached the apartment; it was that of a beautiful woman of thirty who entered unannounced. This was the princess-regnant, the favourite wife of Náná Sáheb. Her features were exceedingly sweet, her complexion was clear and lustrous, and there was an expression of thought and feeling about her that greatly enhanced her loveliness; but there was something on her heart now that weighed down her beauty, the bloom of her damask cheeks had withered, her eyes were vacant and lustreless, and even her lips had lost their roses. Very anxious was that fond heart to rescue her husband from the perdition he was hunting after; but her love was not appreciated, and all her anxieties were laughed at.

The wife entered the room of her mother-in-law, and closing the door after her, sat down at her feet in silence.

"Has aught happened, my daughter, to disturb you? Why is your face so weird-like, so unusually pale?" asked the old woman of the quiet intruder.

"Mother, all over the castle I hear shouts of merriment and joy. I fear the hour of danger has arrived; I fear all my counsels have come to naught. Oh, my mother! You and I have not thought alike on this subject—we, who on all other subjects have always agreed.

You have a clear mind and an unbiassed judgment. Exert them both now for your children's sake. Consider that their whole future rests on one step; pause and reflect before that step is taken, lest it be fatal."

"Why, my daughter, what have I advised that you wish me to reconsider? Are not Náná and Bálá the rightful heirs of my husband's throne? Has not the British Government deprived them of it, most unjustly and cruelly, refusing even the petty stipend that was given to my husband? And should not they, the chosen warriors of their race, fight for their birthrights on an occasion so favourable? We, my child, are women—to us ambition is no virtue; we cannot appreciate it, because we have not the strength for action. But had you a son, would you not wish him to aspire and emulate the greatness of his ancestors?"

"To aspire? Yes; if there were the slightest chance of the aspiration being crowned with success," said the well-judging wife. "But, in the course that you have pointed out to your children, in the course that they are rashly, recklessly rushing upon, what chance is there of success? The British lion is as powerful as ever. Do we not know already how great is that power? How has the lesson learnt before lost its force so soon?"

"You have misread the lesson, my love," replied the high-spirited old woman. "We were insulted and trampled upon when our enemies were in power; all our just rights were ignored; our prayers and petitions smiled at and spurned. But fortune is on our side now. Her name is *Chanchallá*, or the ever-veering, and she has just veered round to us. If we hesitate now the cause is lost to us for ever, and mine is not the heart to waver at the hour of hope, albeit it be also the hour of danger." Her old eyes sparkled, her lips quivered, and her whole frame was agitated as the widow of Bájee Ráo thus gently reproved the timidity of her daughter-in-law.

But the love of the young heart was steadfast; she sighed heavily and said, "Alas! my mother, how are you

sure that fickle fortune has turned round to us at last? Are you not rather blinding your better judgment, and dreaming that that has happened which you wish might happen? What is there to indicate that our conquerors are not as powerful now as before?"

"Let some one call before you the priest of Arghánáth," replied the dowager-queen, "and he will explain to you the revelations of the god. It is not I who in my age and weakness am inciting my children to look forward for glory and power. It is the god of our fathers, the guardian-angel of our race, that has revealed to us that our star is now in the ascendant. Hast thou not heard from thy husband that Mahádeva revealed himself to his *sabáit* in a dream, and told him that the reign of a hundred years conceded to the English is over, and that the time has arrived for driving them back to their sea?"

"Ah, mother! that was indeed a dream," replied the wife; "the idle dream of an idle Bráhmaṇ, who has no idea of the tempest he would evoke. But what proof have you from certain knowledge that the power of the English has declined?"

"We have certain proof even of that, my child," said the old queen triumphantly. "The emissaries of your husband have been to distant lands, and even to actual battle-fields, and they tell us that what we fear in this country so much is a mere scarecrow, a broken reed. The English have triumphed over us here only by deceit and trickery; we have fought their battles against ourselves with our own hands; the bayonets of the sepoys only have established their throne. When those hands and those bayonets are withdrawn where will be their power?"

"This reasoning, my mother," said her daughter-in-law, "is at least delusive. It was the power of the English which forced our submission, and compelled the sepoys to fight their wars; that power has not ceased to exist, and think you that we are strong enough now, or ever will be, to thwart it with impunity?"

The princess had scarcely ceased when the door of the

apartment was violently flung open, and the two brothers, Náná Sáheb and Bálá Sáheb, entered, and kneeled down before their mother's cushion. The wife, as is customary in Hindu families, withdrew from the presence of her male relatives to a corner of the room, while Náná, with a fierce and flashing eye, told the dowager-queen that the mutiny had broken out already at Meerut and Delhi, and asked her to bless her children, that they might declare themselves, that the Mahrattá empire might be regained. The old woman smiled a smile of heartfelt satisfaction, and kneeling down on the cushion, raised her hands to Heaven in token of thankfulness. She then arose from that posture and blessed her children in set phrase. "Bless you, my children," were her concluding words, "and may Mahádeva's blessings be on you. Be bold-hearted, and remember all that you and I have suffered, that when you strike you may strike with fearful effect, for yours is a righteous cause." The wife in the meantime had left the corner she had occupied, and flung herself at the feet of her husband in speechless fear. But it was too late; his heart was now all for ambition and war, and gently disengaging himself from her clasp, he hurried out for Cawnpore.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OUTBREAK AT CÁWNPORE.

GREAT was the rejoicing at Cawnpore when Náná, as a faithful subject of the Government, offered to protect the treasury and the European population generally in the event of an outbreak at that station; and every shadow of suspicion as to his intentions was removed when he actually brought down two guns and two hundred of his *Nujeebs*, or armed retainers, and placed them on guard over the treasury.

"God bless him!" exclaimed the ladies of the station. "He is indeed a true knight, and our best of friends."

"We only wish he may be able to do all that he promises," said the gentlemen. "Our only fear now is that the *budmashes* may prove much too strong for him."

"Ah!" said the ladies, "fortune favours the bold, and Náná is as brave a man as ever lived; and the Providence that has sent him to our assistance will certainly not be unmindful of us in greater need."

Alas! that these anticipations were destined to be ruefully disappointed so soon. On the 5th of June the 2nd Light Cavalry, taking the lead in revolt, rose in a body with a shout, mounted on their horses, and left their lines, setting fire to some bungalows. The pretext urged was that they had been ill-treated by some of their officers, and yet they did not even attempt to molest their officers when, on the first alarm, they hurried to the lines. The mutineers contented themselves by breaking open the jail and setting the prisoners free, and after setting fire to some of the adjacent buildings, they marched off to Nawábgunge, intending to proceed thence to Delhi.

Náná was asleep in his quarters when Ázimoolláh Khán brought him these glad tidings.

"Up, chief! if thou wilt be a king. The hour has come at last; the 2nd Cavalry are off already."

"Off!" exclaimed Náná, jumping out of bed and dressing hastily. "That certainly will not suit us. We want them all here for the present. I have plenty of work for them before they go to Delhi."

"I knew your mind, prince, and have arranged for it," rejoined Ázimoolláh. "The 1st Native Infantry will join them in half an hour, and they will bring them back, I expect. I have not, however, been able to prevail on the miscreants of either regiment to despatch their officers. Every suggestion of that nature has been rejected by them. Nay, they have been begging their officers, and are now forcing them to get into the intrenchment. I hate sentiment in men brought up to act as butchers."

"Oh! never mind that, Khán Báhádoor, just now," said Náná Sáheb. "We shall complete by and by what ever others may leave undone. But the two other regiments must rise, and that at once."

And so it happened. Before midday the 53rd and 56th regiments also revolted. In the meantime Náná Sáheb, seizing the opportunity, took away a great portion of the money in the treasury, which he afterwards gave up to be plundered. He then went over to the rebel camp personally, to persuade the insurgents to come back and annihilate the Europeans at Cawnpore; but they at first turned a deaf ear to all his exhortations.

"Why, my friends," urged Náná, "wherefore this hesitation? Was not this an original condition of our agreement? Is it not a measure absolutely necessary for our protection? Every man you leave behind will soon be placed in command of forces that will be employed in hunting you down to death. In every woman you give up heedlessly, you lose a mistress of alabaster frame."

But these arguments made no impression, and elicited no accordant response; and Náná was well-nigh giving up the task as hopeless, when his good or evil angel, Ázimooláh, was again at his side.

"Your wish, prince, will shortly be realized. The Golundáuzes of the 3rd Oude Horse Battery, having been disarmed, are burning to avenge the insult. They are hastening hither, and will best be able to persuade all the disaffected to the course you propose."

The shout of the Golundáuzes was now heard from afar. "Hur! Hur! Visheswara!" was the frantic cry, and those simple names literally electrified all the insurgents in camp, not excluding the Mahomedans, who raised the corresponding shouts of "Deen," and "Alláh Akbar!"

The representations of the Golundáuzes were strongly urged, and were more successful than those of Náná Sáheb. They were not content simply to refer to the necessity of destroying the Europeans for their own

protection; they also demonstrated how easily it could be effected.

"Guns, powder, and ammunition are all at hand," said they, "and here are the men to work them. Shall we neglect an opportunity so seasonable, and leave those guns to be used against us?"

The Golundáuzes and Náná Sáheb prevailed. Acting upon their advice, all the insurgents placed themselves under the orders of the latter, and returned to Cáwnpore; and Náná, throwing off the mask, informed General Wheeler that he had come back to attack him.

The guns were now pointed against the entrenchment within which the Europeans defended themselves. The defence was maintained heroically for twenty days, but the loss in killed and wounded within the trenches was exceedingly heavy, and the ladies and others soon became maddened by their sufferings. It was at this juncture that villainy stepped forward to the foreground and made a dupe of imbecility. We may mourn for the weakness of human nature that stooped to accept the offers of a discovered traitor, contrary to the advice and remonstrance of some of the best and bravest officers present; but we must admit that the reduced state of the besieged scarcely left them any alternative. The offer of Náná was to let all the besieged go to Alláhábád unmolested, provided they vacated the entrenchment and abandoned Cáwnpore, and made over to him all the Government money and the guns and warlike stores in the camp; and this being assented to, an agreement in writing was drawn up and signed, sealed, and ratified on both sides.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEEP DESIGN.

“WELL, who would have believed that Náná was such a scoundrel!” exclaimed Percival Campbell, an old inhabitant of Cawnpore. “Captain Moore is right; we have made the best arrangement possible under the circumstances, and may thank Heaven that we are enabled to take away our women and children to Alláhábád.”

“Don’t be too sure of that yet,” said Shirn, another resident of the station, “I don’t understand Náná, and shall not be surprised if he is found in the end to be too deep for us all.”

But the suspicions of the second speaker did not appear to be well-founded. On the morning of the 27th June, a number of carts, *doolies*, and elephants were sent to the entrenchment by Náná Sáheb himself to enable the women and children and those who were sick to proceed to the river-side, and by about eight o’clock in the morning, some four hundred and fifty persons arrived there, the men and officers being permitted to take their arms and ammunition with them. Even the boats for the conveyance of the party had been provided, and were allowed to be boarded; but hardly had the fugitives taken their places in them than the boatmen, by previous arrangement, set fire to the thatched awnings of the boats and rushed to the bank, whence a heavy fire of grape and musketry was simultaneously opened. Of thirty boats which had been boarded only two had managed to start; but Náná would not allow any to escape, and one of them was swamped by round shot, while the other with the greatest difficulty was only able to proceed as far as Soorájpore, where it grounded. Those in it were after this obliged to land, and endeavoured to seek safety by flight; but two complete regiments were sent after them in pursuit. All the other boats were seized upon from both banks of the river, which was not

very broad; and the men who were taken were for the most part at once put to the sword. Of the women and children several were wounded, and some of these were released from their sufferings by death, while the rest were confined in a puccá-house, called "*Sabádá Kothee*," from the worst motives, a wicked old woman being appointed to persuade the helpless women to yield their persons to their villainous captor and his equally villainous followers. Both threats and hopes were freely used to induce them to comply, but to the honour of womanhood it has been recorded that there was not one female in the whole band who would accept life and liberty on such terms, all agreeing among themselves to kill each other with their teeth on the first show of violence. One young lady only had been seized upon previously by a trooper of the 2nd Light Cavalry, and carried off to his own quarters, where she was violently treated; but, finding a favourable opportunity, she rose up at night, and securing her ravisher's sword, avenged herself by killing him and three others, after which she flung herself into a well, and was killed. Another little child, a girl of six years, having been separated from her mother, and having received a sword-cut on the thigh, was taken up by a trooper, who expressed a wish to adopt her, he being childless. But Náná was aghast at the idea of a European child—even one—being thus saved, and the trooper was imprisoned for his temerity, the child being committed to the *Subádá Kothee* for such destiny as was reserved for the rest.

Great was the pleasure of Náná Sáheb at the success of his treacherous and cowardly enterprise. At the sunset of the same day a general review of all his troops was made, and salutes were fired, the first, being of twenty-one guns, in honour of himself as Peishwá of Southern India; the second, of nineteen guns, in honour of Bálá Sáheb as Governor-General under him; and the third, of seventeen guns, for Jowállá Prasád, a resaldár, who was appointed Brigadier and Commander-in-chief of Náná's forces.

It was also simultaneously proclaimed by beat of drums throughout Cawnpore and its districts that Náná had entirely conquered the English, whose period of sovereignty in India had expired. The celebrated proclamations were next issued one after another, the first of which referred to the wish of Queen Victoria that all her subjects should be made Christians, the attempt made in accordance with that wish to convert the native army by serving out cartridges smeared with the fat of pigs and bullocks, the failure of the plan, and the total extermination of the British reinforcements, while on their way out from England, by the combined attack made on them in Egypt by the Sultán of Turkey and the Khedive. The second proclamation, assuming the royal tone, assured the people of protection, comfort, and ease, and exhorted them 'to carry on their respective avocations in perfect confidence as heretofore; and a third called upon all subjects and landholders to be obedient to the new Ráj, and on all the officers of the Government to collect the balances of revenue on its behalf, threatening recusants with punishment. In the meantime Náná continued to receive large additions to his forces from all sides, mutincers from every direction, who had heard of his great achievements, pouring into Cawnpore with great alacrity; and to feed and otherwise provide for these, depredations of every kind were freely resorted to, notwithstanding the vaunting notifications which had been issued—the *mahájuns*, or merchants, being reduced to beggary, and the poorer classes almost driven out of their homes.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REFUGE.

WE now turn to the fugitives who had gained the village of Soorájpore. They were in all fourteen in number, and were hotly pursued till they found breathing-time and a temporary refuge in the small temple of Káli, which we have previously described. Their pursuers then brought a gun to bear on the temple, but finding that this made no impression on it, they began to heap up firewood before the doorway, and then set fire to the pile, adding a small quantity of powder to it, the smoke from which compelled the fugitives to sally and take towards the river again. The crowd around them was very great; six of the fugitives were soon cut down, and two others were shot through. Of the rest two ran into the crowd and were not traced; while the other four threw themselves into the river and swam down some six miles, till they were hailed by the retainers of a friendly rájá, Digbejay Sing of Baiswárrá, by whom they were protected and fed, and eventually escorted to the camp of Brigadier-General Havelock when he went to Cawnporo.

"Well, Mackenzie, what are we to do now?" asked one of the two fugitives, who had been separated from the rest, of his companion in peril. The speaker was a man of about forty years, having a very sinister and undignified appearance, which was however counterbalanced by an extra share of cunning and hypocrisy, which formed the chief traits of his character, and were marked unmistakably on his face.

"Why, Bernard, I suppose we must run for our lives," answered his companion, a younger man, and of a larger and stronger frame, whose well-developed audacity and insolence had subsided for the moment to the dangers of his position. "Or perhaps it would be better if we could find shelter here for a time with the villagers."

"But who will give us shelter here? Don't you see that all the men around us are arrayed on the side of Náná?"

"Yes, the men are, but not the women. We can have little indeed to hope for from the men; but the kinder sympathies of the female heart may yet befriend us. Look sharp, Bernard, and tell me if you see any women by themselves."

As if Providence intended especially to befriend them in their flight the first turn of the road, which separated them from their pursuers, brought them before the range of clean huts we described when referring to the *Dasahárá* ceremonies; and the same persons who were then at the door were there at this moment also, occupied almost in the same avocations as before. The boy, however, the hope of the family, had no sooner caught sight of the Europeans than he ran into the house to hide himself; and the two women also rose up in haste to follow him. This has been and still is the position of Englishmen in India. They do not feel in common with the races they have conquered; there is no sympathy on one side, and no confidence on the other. The women scamper off in fear whenever they see English faces in their vicinity; the children look up towards them with alarm; and even the men never come to ask for any favour or assistance from them in their difficulties, if they can help it. There is no bond of union between the two races: there has been no attempt to establish any; and yet much wonder is expressed that the natives are not faithfully attached to their conquerors. Here were two fugitive Europeans in the midst of a hostile village, and yet the first impulse of both the women and children upon whom they came unawares was to run off from their presence.

"Mother, we are sore beset. Save us; have pity on our sufferings," prayed the man called Bernard of the old lady of the huts; but she ran off to the inner apartments without vouchsafing any reply to his appeal, which probably she did not understand.

"You, angel of goodness!" exclaimed Mackenzie, addressing the younger lady, "you also are a mother. For your son's and your husband's sake, and for the sake of our common Father in Heaven, save and shelter us."

The woman did not understand a word of what was told to her; but she well understood the position of the fugitives, and the manner of the appeal made a deep impression on her mind. Without attempting to say anything in reply to it, she merely pointed to the door which she wished them to enter, and following them, she barricaded it within, and then conducted the fugitives to the cow-house, where they were left concealed behind huge heaps of straw.

Such is woman's generous heart! The same female, it will be remembered, had before refused a night's rest to the emissary of Náná, on the plea that her husband was not at home; but there was not a moment's hesitation on her part to screen two fugitives, albeit of a foreign and feared race, who were running for their lives.

The mother remonstrated with her daughter for admitting them. It was unsafe, she said, to shelter the enemies of Náná Sáhob; and for two lone women to live within the same compound with two strong and desperate men of an alien race was exceedingly indiscreet. The simple reply of the daughter was: "Mother, these men are in momentary danger of their lives. If we don't screen them they are sure to be murdered. The risk to us is very great; but God, who sees everything, will protect us while we protect them." It has often been said that the natives throughout the country were hostile towards their rulers during these disturbances. It has been conveniently forgotten that every man or woman that was saved was protected by the natives who were friendly to them.

"What a jewel of a woman this black beauty is!" exclaimed Mackenzie from his quiet retreat between two large bundles of straw. "She is worth her weight in gold!"

"Or of a place in the ancient hall of the Mackenzies, as the wife of a truant son of St. Andrew? Is that what you are thinking of?"

"No," said Mackenzie, with a sneer. "A nigger is a nigger to me for all her virtues. But to tell the truth, Bernard, I would not mind snatching a kiss from those ripe lips, though I may not wish to have her for my wife."

"That's my idea too," responded his companion. "The girl is a brave one though, and it is a pity that she is lost on a nigger husband, who cannot possibly appreciate her worth."

"Well, she has done us a good service; suppose we do one to her in return, and carry her off from her ourang-outang? That would not be a loss to her to mope at, surely?"

"But what shall we do with her? We cannot well have her in common between us, you know."

"Why not?" said Mackenzie. "There is no harm in that when the woman is a nigger, you know. It would be a different thing if she were a European."

"True enough," responded Bernard. "Well, we shall put our two heads together, and see how we can manage it."

CHAPTER IX.

TRIUMPH, DOUBTS, AND FEARS.

THE guns went merrily off from the ramparts of the castle of Bithoor, when Náná, in the height of his glory, visited it on the 2nd of July. A salute of a hundred guns was fired in honour of the Emperor of Delhi, now announced as the Emperor of all India; one of eighty guns was fired to the memory of Bájee Ráo, the putative father of Náná Sáheb and late ex-Peishwá of

Pooná ; one of sixty guns in honour of Náná himself, as Peishwá of Southern India ; one of twenty-one guns in honour of the Queen-dowager of Pooná, the widow of Bájce Ráo ; and another of the same number in honour of the Queen-regnant, Náná's favourite wife.

"The bright stars never lie !" said the Queen-dowager, as she heard the thundering of the guns, and turned a smiling face towards her daughter-in-law, whose countenance was still pensive and overcast. "Has not the prophecy of Dássá Bárá, our revered Gooroo, been fulfilled at last ?"

"No, mother, do not deceive yourself. The danger is only becoming more imminent."

"Why, my child, the Hanumán-horoscope of eight angles, which the sage prepared for your husband, was verified by Náná personally. After seven days of prayer he slept on it, as he was directed to do, whereupon Hanumán revealed himself to him in a dream and assured him of complete success in all his undertakings. And has not this come to pass already ? Has not Cawnpore been wrenched from the English for ever ?"

"Not for ever, mother ! The clouds move on and come back again. If the English have abandoned Cawnpore, they are sure to reoccupy it."

"But who will reoccupy it, my daughter ? Our enemies have been killed and rooted out, and both Dássá Bárá and Dabedeen pronounce the triumph to be ominous."

"Ominous ? Yes, 'Ominous,' mother, is the word. Ominous of much evil in the future, I fear. Don't forget, mother, the fable of our country, that every drop of a Rákshasa's blood gives birth to a separate Rákshasa to replace the dead fiend. The English are descended from the Rákshases, and every drop of English blood that has been shed is sure to raise us a new enemy."

"You dream, my child, and discompose yourself unnecessarily with your dreams. If the English are powerful, so are we."

"I dream indeed, mother, as you say; or rather, I have dreamt as the priest of Arghanáth and my husband have dreamt. But mine has been a fearful dream, and I must reveal it. I sought for my husband and our kinsmen in my sleep: I found them not in the castle of Bithoor, which I saw had been burnt to the ground; I sought for them in the ancient palaces of Pooná, but they were not there. In the untold depths of an unknown forest, in which man had never set foot before, with the hungry tiger hunting for him on one side, and the vengeful Briton closing upon him from another, I saw my beloved husband abandoned and alone. I have knelt daily and nightly to Mahádeva to avert this awful fate from him; but no cheering smile have I been able to read on Iswara's face even in my dream."

"Your dream is naught, my child, and had birth only in your fears. Give not to the light a cloud so dark that suits darkness only. The god of our country cannot so desert his own soldier in the hour of his need. He fights on our side already, and at this moment has crowned us with triumph. Damp not your husband's ardour with your fears."

At this moment the queen of the Peishwá was called away by a female servant sent to her by her husband. Wan, haggard, and almost spectral was the face of the loving wife as she flung her arms around the neck of her truant lord; nor was Náná unmindful of her condition.

"Ah! my beloved, what has disturbed your mind so much as to reduce you to this state? Speak, dearest, what grief sits heavy on your heart? Náná would be dead indeed before he ceases to feel for you."

A shade passed over her delicate features, and she sighed heavily.

"You have put your foot in the lion's den, my lord," said she; "how will you get it out unscathed?"

"The lion's den! Is that your fear? Why, love, the lion you dread is an old and feckless one, whose teeth have all been drawn out. Our hearts are bold, our arms

are strong, and Mahádeva has blessed our cause already. Don't you fret yourself in fear."

"The cause is a blessed one, I know; but oh! my husband, the arms of the white man are much stronger than yours. The English lion is not so toothless as you fancy, and you have outrun the bounds of discretion in lashing him up to rage. Beware, my lord, of the fatal spring!"

"The spring! He will never spring, my love; we have cut all his tendons, and he cannot stand."

"Not so, my lord; you have only cut the chain that tethered him down to peace; untied him for the spring that must surely follow. Your only safety now is in flight. Save me, my lord, by saving yourself; save us all before it is too late. If we fly now to Poona under feigned names, and keep ourselves apart from the commotions at hand, we may yet be pardoned and spared."

"Pardoned and spared! Are these words befitting the Peishwá's queen in the hour of her husband's triumph? Speak them not, love, for, they do not become either you or me. 'Tis I that have raised all the tempest around us; almost I alone. For this purpose I visited Calpie, Delhi, and Lucknow. The Emperor of Delhi and the Begum of Oude are but puppets in my hand. And shall I leave them to enjoy that success which my wit and my prowess have so nearly secured?"

"You dream, my lord, when you speak of success. You have killed the English soldiers in Cawnporc. Is the English nation less strong for it than they were? Where are your arms and your soldiers, my lord? Will the old man of Delhi fight? He cannot if he would. Is the Begum strong enough to support you? Were she ten times more willing than she is, she has not the power to do so. Can the mutinous sepoys be depended upon? They have deceived one master, and will not be more faithful to another. Believe me, I do not speak simply from fear. I am a Mahrattá, my lord, as well as you are; the women of our country have always fought alongside

of their husbands and their brethren. I, too, grieve for the debasement of our country as you do, for our past glory, our lost name. But I see further than you do in this matter, my lord. I see plainly that the storm you have raised will only level you with the dust, and with you all the fortresses, towers, and opposition you have called forth. Oh, my lord, you have recklessly taken your stand on the brink of a precipice. Stop, or you are undone for ever !”

“Hush ! dearest lady, hush ! Nor raise again those doubts which I have struggled so hard to pacify. I will not say that your fears are groundless. But thus must not think the wife of Náná Sáheb, far less Náná himself. I have rushed too far forward now to go back. A throne or death, no matter how it comes, is the hazard of the die. I know the precipice on which I stand ; but I may not recede now from my doom. Nor, lady, could Pooná, or any other place in India, give us that shelter which you wish me to seek.”

“And why was this fearful position sought for and assumed ?” asked the wife.

“It is my destiny that has led me on,” was Náná’s reply.

“Then are we undone indeed !” said the wife, and sobbed heavily on his breast.

CHAPTER X.

THE MASSACRE.

THE arrival of a British force at Futtehpore obliged Náná Sáheb to take the offensive sooner than he would have wished it. He sent ten thousand troops against this force, but they were soon beaten back. Reinforcement after reinforcement was despatched to aid them ; but to no effect. At last Náná himself headed a fresh party, and proceeded

to the seat of war, which had already approached within twenty miles of Cawnpore; but he found so little chance of success that he was obliged to run back to the station with all his followers. This retrograde movement spread such panic all around that, leaving house and property, every man who had a hand in the rebellion took to his heels, many deserting even their families in their eagerness to escape with their lives. The sepoy in particular, laden with immense booty, were the first to disperse in every direction. Nor could Náná afford to stay behind them, though he would not leave till he had completed the dastardly atrocity he had planned from the outset.

Just after their defeat at Futtehpoore the rebels had captured a few poor natives, who were brought in to Náná as having been the bearers of letters supposed to have been written to the British commander by the helpless females kept imprisoned in the *Subúlú Kothée*.

"Ha!" exclaimed Náná, "and so there has been surreptitious correspondence between our prisoners and our enemies? Put all the go-betweens to the sword to begin with—we shall deal with the prisoners presently."

"A little respite is necessary, king," said Bába Bhut, one of Náná's general-superintendents. "I have information that some of the *Mahájuns* and Bengalee Báboos in the city are implicated with the spies, and I would trace out these before destroying the evidence against them."

"Seize all the Báboos and *Mahájuns*," said Náná; "we want no evidence against them. They must all be more or less implicated; nor does it matter if they are not. Let the spies be cut down at once, as I have ordered. Of the Báboos who write English we had better cut off their right-hands and noses; and the same punishment will also do for the *Mahájuns*, unless they can purchase their liberty at a fair price. Some English prisoners have also been taken from Futtehghurh; these may be shot."

The orders of the pseudo-Peishwá were carried out at once. The so-called spies, or go-betweens, were put to the

sword, and the English prisoners shot to death. After this the women confined in the *Subáidá Kothé* were ordered to come out, but neither threats nor persuasion could induce them to do so.

"We can die here together," said one of them. "Our enemy is relentless, there is no hope for us here or beyond these walls. But here, dying together, we shall at least be safe from indignity."

"But there is no fear of any indignity, Mem," said Náná's emissary. "No one will harm you if you will come out quietly; otherwise you will all be dragged out with a rude hand, and no sort of insult will be spared."

While he spoke he seized one of the women to exemplify the threat he had launched out; but all the other prisoners came to her aid, and so laid hold of each other, and clung so close that it was impossible to separate them or to drag them out together. This being reported to Náná he ordered some troopers to shoot at them from the doors and windows; while others rushed upon them with swords and bayonets. Then was commenced that butchery which has never perhaps been equalled. Many of the poor, helpless creatures fell down in their agony at the feet of their murderers, and asked to be spared. But, even if the ruffians had wished to spare them, they had no power to do so. The massacre was deliberately completed in the midst of the most dreadful shrieks and cries, which were heard from a great distance. There were about one hundred and forty or one hundred and fifty souls in the *Kothé*, including the children, and from a little before sunset till after nightfall, the whole time was occupied in killing them. Groans! Has any murderer ever been disturbed by groans? These murderers at least were not. The piercing cry of children! Has it ever arrested the uplifted arm of an assassin? These assassins at least did not acknowledge the spell. They went through their fearful work untroubled either by cries or groans, stopping only at candle-light, when the building was locked up for the night, and the murderers went to their homes.

After that night of horror came a morning as bright and cheerful as any that had preceded it. How long was it allowed to remain so? The doors of the *Kothee* being opened, it was found that some ten or fifteen females and a few children had found shelter under the murdered bodies of their fellow-prisoners, and so escaped death. Were these to be spared? The fiend in a human form shrieked "No!" and fresh orders were given to terminate their lives. But they were not able to bear the idea of being cut down as their associates had been; the horrors of the previous night were maddening, and they all rushed out as one man into the compound, and seeing a well there, threw themselves into it without hesitation. Poor brave English hearts! brave even to the last! Brave women and brave children! In what page of history shall we read an account to equal your heroic sufferings? Nor was the ferocity of the fiend yet glutted. The dead bodies of those who had been murdered inside the house were now dragged out like those of dogs, and thrown over the living into the well; after which the cowards moved on, and the station was deserted. On the following morning Cawnpore was reoccupied by the English forces under Havelock, and then arose the cry from all ranks, and the vain regret that they had come, alas, too late!

CHAPTER XI.

THE REQUITAL.

BERNARD and Mackenzie were well fed by their hostess before they retired for the night to their straw-pallets in the cow-house at Soorájpore. When the night had advanced further a sudden cry of alarm was heard in the village, that a large party of soldiers had entered it in search of fugitives. Both the old woman and her daughter,

startled from their sleep, rose up in fear, the latter clasping her boy in her arms.

"Oh, Mahádeva!" exclaimed she in fear; "is it a crime to shelter and to save? Oh, mother, what shall we do now? Surely the soldiers will be searching every house for the fugitives, and what will become of us when they are found?"

"Hush!" said the old woman. "The mistake we have made cannot now be repaired. We should not have sheltered the fugitives. But since we have done so we must allay suspicion by boldness and lies. This is not your work. Go, hide yourself where you best may, and leave me alone to go through this trial, or rather, leave the boy with me, as I must meet the soldiers with him."

With that the old woman, holding an earthen lamp in one hand and the boy by the other, proceeded towards the door of the house just when the soldiers had halted before it with a roar.

"Open the door," said the foremost of the party, "or we shall batter it down and set fire to your homestead;" and with the threat came a furious knock on the door that almost unhinged it.

With steady hands the old woman unbarred the latch.

"What is your will, sirs?" said she, with well-affected surprise and fear. "What may your will be with an old woman and her grandchild?"

"Who else have you got in the house now?" was the question asked in reply.

"None other, sirs, at present. The father of this boy and his uncle have gone to the marts in Alláhábád to sell grain. I am expecting them every day, but they have not come back yet, and so we are living only by ourselves."

"I believe you, old lady," said one of the throng, evidently a man in authority; "for I was in this place before, and begged for a night's shelter from you, which you did not grant. She is not likely, friends, to house strangers of a foreign race when she curtly refused to

house me. Nay, mother, I bear you no grudge for that ; but you have told us one fib to-night, for surely the mother of that boy is in the house."

"Never mind the mother of the boy now," said the leader of the party, who was no other than Bálá Sáheb himself ; "we have plenty of work before us ; move on !" and with another boisterous shout the party moved on, while the old woman with now trembling hands fastened her door in haste.

Bernard and Mackenzie had both come out of their hiding-place, and had armed themselves to sell their lives dearly ; but they were thankful that the occasion for defence had been so adroitly postponed.

"Thou hast the calm aspect of a heroine, mother," said Bernard ; "and I wish I had my purse by me to repay such service adequately."

"We want no payment, soldiers. Money does not repay good acts. Go to your beds again, and may the rest of your sleep be undisturbed. Early in the morning you must leave our place."

But here her daughter interposed. "We send them to certain destruction, mother, if we send them away immediately after their pursuers. Give them another day, that, when the roads are clear of loiterers, they may escape in safety."

"Be it so, my child, if you wish it ; but while they remain here our danger is not over."

And so they remained, the incarnate fiends, in that home of innocence, to plot mischief against those poor creatures who were incurring so much peril for their sakes. A second night on their pallets of straw enabled them to ripen their scheme of baseness and ingratitude, and to develope it. The night was dark. The traitors broke open the room in which the females slept. A woman's shriek—an unavailing struggle! Oh merciful Heaven! why is crime triumphant in the world?

The old woman shrieked for aid. "Help! murder! Save us, neighbours," was the cry ; but the neighbours

were all fast asleep, and very few heard that cry of fear. The boy ran out in terror to hide himself; he understood not the nature of the outrage that was consummated. The victim struggled hard, but in vain; when the violence was completed she was insensible as a corpse.

And then the ruffians fled, the old woman running after them, though she was twice pelted at, calling upon all the villagers to rise up against them. But there were none to arrest their steps, and when the villagers did get up the criminals had already made good their retreat.

And how did the village community think and speak of the matter? Some expressed horror at the crime; others vowed vengeance, but in bated breath; while others condemned in unmeasured terms the indiscretion of the women that had resulted in such outrage. But the old woman did not stop to listen to their comments. With a heavy heart she recrossed her threshold, and locking the door doubly, proceeded to the bedside of the sufferer. She was surprised to find her greatly recovered, but she also saw on her face an unnatural calm, which contrasted fearfully with her ordinary sweetness.

"Cheer up, my child," said she. "With the morning I myself shall go in quest of Bálá Sáheb, and direct him against the fugitives. Believe me, your wrongs shall be avenged."

"No, mother; we are too poor to think of vengeance: our lot is to suffer. I was indiscreet in sheltering them, and my indiscretion has been severely punished. Mother, let me die. Take this boy, mother, from me, and make him over to his father. Tell him that I was true to him to the last, and that he must be true to our hapless child. Give my love to my brother. Mother, so long as you live be kind to my son. Men cannot love children as women can."

"But why do you speak, my daughter, in that desponding tone? Yours was not the crime. Your husband is devotedly attached to you, and will not cast you away for the violence you have suffered. Why do

you speak of leaving us, my child? I do not understand your words. What are you thinking of?"

The wife shuddered when her husband's love for her was alluded to. "Mother, I am no longer worthy of him. Seek him out and my brother early in the morning, that my funeral ceremonies may be performed by those who were dearest to me. I have swallowed all the rat's-bane that was in the house, and feel the effects of the poison in my veins already."

The strength which had buoyed her up was now exhausted; her head drooped, her eyes dilated, and the next moment she was a corse. And then there was a howl from the old woman that brought again all the villagers to her door; and the door was forced open, and there was the hurrying to and fro of many footsteps, and the peering of many eyes over the corse—over the poor violated woman that lay unavenged!

CHAPTER XII.

THE FLIGHT FROM BITHOOR.

It was on the morning of the 17th of July that, Cawnpore having been recaptured by General Havelock, Náná Sáheb returned once more to Bithoor. He had still a large force with him, and many guns; but his men were thoroughly disheartened and disorganized, and they were deserting him in numbers.

"Mother, our luck is over," said Náná Sáheb, addressing the widow of Bájeeo Ráo. "The soldiers murmur loudly, though they have taken more booty than we have got. For us there is no safety, I fear, except in flight."

"Flight! while the stars give you a throne? That must not be, my son. Be of bold heart; fresh troops will join us ere noon, and Cawnpore will be regained. If not,

with our castle fully manned we shall yet be able to defy the English general and his forces here at Bithoor."

"No, mother, no; our followers are utterly prostrated, and we are too weak for defence. Our best course now is to proceed to Lucknow."

"And there seek protection under the coif of a dissipated Begum? Is it thus speaks Náná Sáheb, the adopted son of Bájee Ráo? Then is the Mahrattá cause lost indeed for ever!"

Náná remained silent under the rebuke for a time, then slowly asked, "Will it please you, mother, if I remain here to be betrayed? Every man in our following has a secret project of his own. Save you, mother, and my wife, I have no one on whom I can rely."

"That is always the fate of kings, my son. Make it their interest to stand by you, and you will force all your followers to be faithful to you. Give them everything that you can afford; promise them more in the future. The cunning workman makes use of the most dangerous tools with safety."

"Every shift and expedient, mother, have I tried—every promise have I exhausted; but they waver still. They are grumbling on all sides, and are deserting rapidly. Deceive not yourself, mother; we remain in Bithoor but to die."

"And if it be so, my son, even then would I wish you to remain here to fight and die. If you are the last man at the guns, take your stand there and fight on, and I at least will not desert or betray you. You have no mercy to expect from the white man; you can die without asking for any."

"I could do that, mother; but our cause is not so desperate yet. Havelock fights hard; the devil of the Christians guides his blade. But the cause of the English is not so hopeful in other places, and our reverse here may yet be remedied if we can only throw more strength into Lucknow."

"Be it so then, my son. But remember that Náná

at Lucknow becomes only the coadjutor of a Mahomedan king, not a king himself."

"Not so, my mother. The partitions of the empire have been secured to us severally by treaty. Kings assist each other without detriment to their rights."

"Were the whole empire in your grasp, my son, you would think otherwise; and so will Huzrut Mul and Mummoo Khán, when they find themselves able to throw you off. But that matters not at present. If we must leave Bithoor, I care little whether we go to Delhi or Lucknow."

During this conference between mother and son the greatest consternation was spreading all over Bithoor, sure tidings having been received that the English at Cawnpore were making mighty preparations to attack it.

"Not an hour is to be lost," said Ázimoolláh. "Send word to the Peishwá in the zenáná. Let him come out at once and arrange for our flight."

Náná received this message in his wife's apartment, where the two were communing together. He had the greatest difficulty in breaking to her the tidings of their danger, and did it as tenderly as his nature would permit.

"It was this, this that I foresaw, my dear lord," exclaimed she, when she understood their exact position; "this indeed that I was afraid of. It has come on sooner even than I expected. But are you prepared for the occasion, my lord?"

"I am. Your lips chide me not, my love, your heart feels for me, and I am certain I can be happy with you in any position. Nor is all hope lost to us yet. Though we are obliged to abandon Bithoor now, all our prospects are not closed at once; and I still expect to make you the queen of the Mahrattá throne ere long, and never brow better deserved a royal diadem than thine."

"Abandon that thought, my lord, and everything may yet go on well. Think not of thrones or states. Our good mother is ambitious; I am not. Devise only how we may be safe and happy in a quiet, private life. We

have already compromised ourselves fearfully; no place within British territory will perhaps screen us altogether from danger. But there are lands beyond India, where we may lead a safe and humble life; and I in any place and position will be happy with you, my lord. Cut yourself off from the meshes that entangle you, and then indeed would I not regret the difficulties that surround us."

Náná was almost unmanned by the unrepenting love of his wife, and he held down his head, unable to reply. At this moment Bálá Sáheb burst into the room.

"Come, brother, come. Our moments are very precious now. In a short time even our retreat may be cut off."

Very hurried were the preparations which were made for their flight. The troops were allowed to disperse on all sides, and repair by different routes to Lucknow; and the pseudo-Peishwá left the castle of Bithoor with a small retinue only. He had barely time to escape. Bithoor was occupied by the English immediately after, and the palace burnt to the ground.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BEREAVED.

THE fugitives from Soorájpore had fled on through darkness with the speed of the hunted deer, and were proceeding in the direction of Futtehpore, where they expected to fall in with the English army. By the time that they were half-way to it the dawn was breaking slowly over the meadows, and they shortly after saw a cart jolting over the ruts of a lonely road.

"It would be a relief to us if we could make the cartmen turn round and take us to Futtehpore," said Bernard.

"But they won't, I think," replied Mackenzie: "and

we must not attempt to force them, as that would attract attention."

"You are right, perhaps, Mackenzie; but my feet are bleeding, and I cannot stir my stumps. Are we to lie down here and die?"

Mackenzie was silent, as if in thought. In the meantime the cart drew nearer, and they found that it was empty, there being only two men on it, apparently peasants, who had disposed of their goods and were returning home. Both of them were stalwart, sinewy men, though possibly not more courageous than Hindu bumpkins generally are.

"Ahem, carters," hailed Mackenzie; "will you take us to Futtehpore for hire?"

"No," replied the peasants. "We are just returning thence, and are anxious to go home."

"But we must have your cart at any rate. Your feet are in excellent condition, and you can easily walk home, while ours are in miserable plight. Will you lend or sell us your cart?"

"We cannot afford to do either, though we are averse to say 'nay' to Englishmen in distress."

"Ah, my friends. In this country it is the rule with us Englishmen to impress the carts we require for service, and you know well that very few would care to pay you a *courie* for the carriage they would take away from you by force. But we here are more considerate, and you should not be unreasonable with us."

"Well, sirs, as for impressing our cart, you could not do so just at present without raising the whole country against you; and you know that that would not be a safe game for you. But we do not wish to be unreasonable, and will give up our cart and bullocks if you will pay a fair price for them."

This was agreed to with alacrity, and the men, who had elsewhere affected not to have their purses with them, were now glad enough to fork out the money that was asked for. The cart with its new occupants then

turned back in the direction of Futtehpore, while the peasants pursued their onward journey on foot.

"I am afraid, Probhoo, that we have not done right in giving up our cart to those men. Mischief is written on their faces. Either they are flying from it, or are hastening to it."

"That does not concern us, Shunkur. We find them in difficult straits, and help them without loss to ourselves. There is nothing wrong so far as that goes. If they are after mischief, or have been in it, a cart and a pair of bullocks will not help them out of it long."

Thus spake the husband and brother of the poor suicide of Soorájpore, not knowing what fearful mischief those miscreants had made in their own household; and when they did know of it where were the wretches again to be found? They had mixed with the rest of the English forces at Futtehpore, and had marched on thence to other places.

For three days, three long, unending days, did Shunkur remain bereft of strength and reason. These were followed by a longer interval of fierce and burning fever, disturbed by incoherent ravings. But he was well tended, his brother-in-law Probhoo scarcely ever stirring from his side, while his mother-in-law attended to all those wants to which women know how best to minister. At last his sickness left him, and health and intellect were regained—regained for one purpose only, the thought of which electrified his debilitated frame—Revenge!

"I have sworn, Probhoo, that I will avenge her untimely and fearful end. Tarry you here at home and protect your mother and my son. My destiny leads me on to an appointed doom."

"Not so, Shunkur; you shall not go alone. I too have sworn revenge. Our mother must look after the child as she may, and neighbours will help them both. Our enemies are strong; we must go together against them."

And so it was arranged. But the great difficulty was to find out where the miscreants were. During Shunkur's

long illness the English forces had been marching hither and thither in all directions from Alláhábád. How were the ruffians to be found? The relief of the garrison at Lucknow was at this time the principal aim of the English in this quarter. Would the ravislfers be among the reinforcements sent thither?

"We can only hunt for them in the dark, my brother," said Probhoo; "we don't even know their names, and to trace out two Englishmen by their faces, out of so many scattered all over the country, will be a very difficult affair."

"We must do it nevertheless, my brother. We have sworn to devote our lives to the search."

"Hist! I hear a step. I hope it is of some one who can help us in this strait."

The intruder was an elderly but well-made man, ~~having~~ a calm and even noble aspect, though it was somewhat worn and thoughtful.

"Can I have a night's shelter anywhere here, my friends?" asked he.

"Yes, if you will tell us who you are and whither you are bound," was the reply of Probhoo.

"It is hardly fair to insist on a condition like that," said the stranger. "We are unknown to each other, and can have no concern in each other's affairs, and the times are troublesome, when brother scarcely trusts his brother with his affairs."

"The greater the need that we should know whom we shelter. Our household has suffered already by sheltering strangers."

"May I ask of what race they were?"

"Accursed Englishmen!" was the bitter response of Shunkur. "Cowardly ruffians, who have brought shame and misery where there was nothing but happiness and peace."

"And have the traitors escaped?"

"Yes; for we were not at home. But if there be a God in heaven our day must come!"

“Let us pray that it may,” said the stranger; “and accept me as one of yourselves, oh my friends, for our cause is the same. I will tell you my story, and hear yours in return; and, if you will give me a night’s rest with you, it may be that we may decide upon hunting our game together.”

The shelter asked for was given, and a friend of great value was found in the stranger.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HÁVILDÁR’S STORY.

THE story of the new-comer was as follows:—“He was a Hávildár, attached to the 10th Regiment N.I., stationed at Futtchgurh. That regiment had never intended to mutiny, and the men were steadfastly attached to their colours. On the Queen’s Birthday, the 24th of May, they received a letter from a friend at Áchánuk (Barrackpore), a place ten miles distant from Calcutta, stating that there had been a quarrel at that station between a Chámár (workman in leather) and a sepoy, the former of whom had asked for water to drink, which the latter had indignantly refused. ‘How can I give you water,’ said the sepoy, ‘when you belong to the Chámár caste; and how dare you ask it of me knowing that I am a Kshetriya?’ ‘When the Kshetrias,’ replied the Chámár, ‘do not hesitate to bite off with their teeth the cartridges which I lubricate with the fat of cows and pigs, it is mere affectation on their part to refuse a drop of water to a poor man on the plea of caste.’ This was followed by more angry words on both sides, after which a conciliatory inquiry was made, which resulted in the discovery, by several sepoys together, of Chámárs being actually employed, at a short distance from the cantonment where the cartridges were made, in smearing them with the obnoxious grease.

This news was received with different feelings by different men in the regiment. Some believed in its truth, others received it with distrust; but they all remained silent over it for the time.

“A short while after the regiment received a second letter, which came from Barcoilly, in which it was stated that it had been ascertained at Delhi that with the *áttá* (flour) supplied for the use of the sepoy were mixed the ground bones of cows and pigs; that the shopkeepers had been prohibited from selling *áttá* of any other kind; and that bones were also mixed with salt and sugar. A third letter, received from the same quarter, stated that with the *ghee* (melted butter) given to the men was mixed the fat of cows and pigs.

“There were still some men in the regiment, and among them myself,” said the Hávildár, “who did not believe in these stories. But we people of India are steadfastly attached to our religion; and the Company Báhádoor, our former masters, had respected us for this. We therefore went in a body to our officers to show them the letters that had come to us, and to ask them to enlighten us with their knowledge on the subjects referred to, as we were still loath to believe that the information as it had come to us was wholly true. Well, what was the answer they gave us? They called us a parcel of donkeys; said that our feelings towards the Government were already suspected; and threatened on the display of any sort of recusancy to disarm us.

“At this juncture came in amongst us the well-known *chuppáties*, a kind of fiery-cross sent by Náná Sáheb to stir us up to action. These cakes were said to have originated with Dássá Bába, the spiritual guide of the Bithoor family, who, having read Náná’s fortune in the stars, made a *jálóo*, or charm, which he reduced into pills, and having made an immense number of cakes, put a pill into each, the cakes being carried all over the country to extend the force of the charm among those by whom they were received. We, however, refused to encourage

these attempts, and the *chuppáties* sent to us were returned.

“The next message transmitted to us came in the name of Náná himself. He advised us that we were suspected, that British troops were marching on us, and that on their arrival at the station we would be disarmed. This was the threat that our officers had virtually hinted at when we proffered our first complaint; it therefore made a deep impression on the credulity of the men throughout the regiment, and, a council having been convened by them to consider the measures that should be taken, a fresh representation to our officers was determined upon.

“I was one of the spokesmen chosen. I took off my cap before the major, and exhibited to him this sword-cut on my head; I bared my right arm before him, and showed him how it had been nearly severed by another wound; I pointed to this bullet-hole through my left elbow. All these wounds, I said, I had received in fighting the battles of my masters; and I asked if it was true that we were now suspected, and were to be disarmed? The reply was that I was an old fool, and that if we did correspond with Náná Sáheb we deserved to be disarmed and punished. I ventured to remonstrate. We had not, I said, corresponded with Náná Sáheb; it was he who had been sending us *chuppáties* and letters; but he had received no answer from us to any of his communications. I laid stress also on the general fidelity of the regiment; on the many fights we had fought, on the many honours we had won. ‘What better guarantee of good conduct,’ said I, ‘can you expect from us than this, that while we are serving in one regiment, our children are serving in others? There are three of my sons, major, now in Her Majesty’s service.’ ‘And can you tell us how many of them have turned traitors already? Will you show us the letters you have received from them lately?’ My blood boiled within me to resent this cowardly insult; but I controlled my feelings, and simply answered that all my sons were stanch and true, and that not one of

the regiments to which they belonged had rebelled. But the reply was received with an insolent smile of incredulity; and I well believe that it is treatment like this that has made traitors of us all.

“On the 16th of June the Subadár of the 41st Regiment, which had recently come from Sectápore, and was located a few miles distant from us across the river, reported that the men of the regiment had risen and murdered their officers, and asked us to do the same. Still true to our salt, we placed this letter before our colonel, and said that we had written back in reply that we would abide by our faithfulness, and that they had better not come in our way, as we would certainly oppose them. But we were still regarded with distrust. A little show of confidence even now would have strengthened the fidelity of the regiment; but this was withheld, and on my remonstrating with a junior officer on this point I was—will you believe it, brethren?—struck by him with a cane. That blow has made me a rebel; that insult can only be wiped out with the coward’s blood. After this the whole regiment rebelled, the greater portion of it crossing over at once to Oude. I did not go with them, because I have first my private wrong to avenge, and I have not yet been able to trace out the valiant captain-of-the-cane, who was the first to fly!”

The old man’s face foamed as if he were suffering from an attack of hydrophobia. In his case at least it was not disaffection to the State that had made him what he was. The conduct of the officers in many cases hurried their men into open revolt.

CHAPTER XV.

ENLISTED.

SHUNKUR and Probhoo were very much scandalized on hearing the Hávildár's story.

"We blame you not, soldier," said the first, "for the position you have assumed. If we understand you aright, you fight both against your personal enemy and against the State. But ours is a grievance of a different kind. We bear the State no grudge." He then slowly but passionately recounted the story of his wrongs, which even the rude soldier listened to with a moistened eye.

"Unhappy man!" said the Hávildár, "you have a great wrong indeed to avenge; and though you are not opposed to the State, the prosecution of your private vengeance against two Englishmen can, at this moment, be regarded in no other light than as rebellion against the State; nor will you be able to get at your enemies except in the thickest of the fight. Choose, therefore, whether you will take me with you, or hunt your game apart. You have great responsibilities of your own, and I do not wish to increase them by my company."

A long private conference between Shunkur and Probhoo was at last terminated by the acceptance of the assistance proffered by the mutineer, and this being settled, it remained now to decide in what direction their campaign was to be opened.

"The state of the case is this, my friends," said the Hávildár. "All the country between this and Lucknow is at present in the occupation of the Tálookdárs of Oude and the zemindárs who have risen against the State. These two parties have dissolved their internal strife and dissensions, and have united for the one common object of driving out the English. All of them are collecting large forces of villagers, whom they are arming at their own expense, to co-operate with them. If we believe

the enemies we wish to seek out to have proceeded to Lucknow, as I think is most likely, the best thing for us to do would be to take service under one or other of these chiefs, stipulating for our being sent as soon as practicable to fight the British forces at Lucknow. If, on the other hand, we suspect our personal enemies to have gone in any other direction, all we could do at present would be to station ourselves at some central place, like Alláhábád, for watching the troops which are constantly passing and repassing it."

"So far as our men are concerned," said Shunkur, "all the information we have been able to collect seems to indicate that they have gone towards Lucknow."

"I have traced my man also in the same direction," said the Hávildár, "and would therefore advise our taking service at once with one of the Oude rájáhs, several of whom are in our immediate neighbourhood, and to be quickly found."

This was agreed to.

Of the many undeclared rebels of this period one of the best known was Surubdown Sing, the zemindar of Seeáhdee, who carried on his designs with peculiar skill and quite in a systematic manner. He was an old man, but still retained a tall and upright form, with great fire and brilliancy of eyes. It is said that he poisoned one of his wives whom he suspected of unfaithfulness, and killed her son under the conviction that he was a bastard. He was a thorough *budmásh* in other respects also. On the one side he had allied himself with all the rebel chiefs of Oude, and was raising men for their service; on the other hand he was furnishing carriage and supplies to the English commanding-officers, and obtaining certificates of good character from them. A party of fifteen hundred men had just been raised by him for service under Rájáh Bijee Bábádoor Sing, one of the Oude chiefs, and our three volunteers were the last recruits admitted into this band. The men selected were all tall, good-looking soldiers, but ill accoutred and worse armed. They were

differently dressed, and while some carried carabines and matchlocks, others were armed only with long lances and *tulwárs*. The leader of this party was one Dabeebux, a large coarse-looking man, who had the reputation of a fearless soldier. Like Náná, he also was known to be inordinately fond of spilling blood; and he made all his recruits swear by Káli and the Korán that no English life, of man, woman, or child, would by any of them be spared. Shunkur and Probhoo took the oath with averted eyes; the Hávildár did so with readiness and alacrity.

"Now let us march on," said Dabeebux, "plundering as we go, and slaughtering all whom we may find opposed to us;" and these orders were received by his men with an approving and uproarious shout.

"Ha! what a life we have adopted, my brother," said Shunkur to Probhoo. "How many harmless men are destined to suffer death and ignominy at our hands!"

"Regard not the matter in that light, Shunkur," said Probhoo. "Remember only the wrongs which have driven us to this course. Providence would not allow us to lead a quiet life. We must move on with the current, as the avenging demons direct us."

"Yes, as the demons lead us on, and they are hounding us forward to vengeance! But we that have suffered, how can we avoid feeling for those who suffer like us?"

"We must at all events affect not to feel for them. Our comrades are rough soldiers, who must not suspect our feelings, as they are sure to misinterpret them. You need not butcher when they do so; but betray not your detestation for what they do."

Shunkur made no reply; there was no time for any. They saw before them a small hostile party despatched by the Rájáh of Báuśce, a well-wisher of the English Government, who was determined to oppose the onward movement of Dabeebux. But Dabeebux had the stronger force, and the contest forced on him was quickly decided. The single arm of Dabeebux made terrible havoc among his opponents; and his efforts were ably seconded by

several of his followers, notably by the Hávildár. The Bánsee Rájáh's men, finding the affair too hot for them, at last took to their heels, upon which Dabcebux, rearranging his men, pursued his forward course. In rallying his forces, however, he looked at each man with the eye of a chief.

"Our last two recruits," said he, looking daggers at Probhoo and Shunkur, "have shown little stomach for the game they have chosen. I shall keep an eye on them, and if I don't find more zeal and earnestness in them hereafter they will have to thank themselves only for what may follow."

CHAPTER XVI.

ONE SIDE OF THE PICTURE.

"PEST on these mutineers!" said Mrs. Carbery, while lolling on her couch in her own palatial residence at Chowringhee; "they are spreading disaffection throughout India. The storm is closing on us from all sides, and in a short time perhaps Calcutta itself will not be a safe place for us."

"Is it safe now, my dear?" said her husband, Mr. Patrick Carbery, a Government official in Calcutta of high position, but of tender nerves. "Who can say to-night what we may have to encounter to-morrow?"

The lady turned pale, and fixed a look of alarm on her husband.

"For shame, Pat!" said Mr. Frederick McGavin, a friend of the family, who had dropped in; "you have chased away the colour from Mrs. Carbery's face. What on earth have we to fear here, where we are strong enough to eat up all the rebels that the *bazaars* may belch forth?"

"Softly, Bill! It is not simply the rebels that the

bazaars may give birth to that we have to fear. It is now certain that all the sepoy regiments throughout India are unfaithful to us, and so also are all the great chiefs and zemindárs."

"I deny both premises *in toto*, Pat," said McGavin. "First, as regards the sepoys, without speaking of the armies of Madras and Bombay, it is not just to say even of the army of Bengal that it comprises traitors only, for we know that there are many soldiers in it, and many regiments, that have stood firm against wicked advices and examples, and that at this moment are giving unquestionable proofs of their attachment for us. And as for the landed-gentry, with very few exceptions, it is their interest to side with us, and they have done so. Don't raise a panic, Pat, when there is no reason for any."

"My dear William, it is blind confidence like yours that has given rise to these disturbances in several places. A little more foresight and prudence on the part of our own officers would have prevented many of the massacres which have been perpetrated by the rebels being so much as attempted with impunity; such, for instance, as those at Bareilly, Jounpore, Fyzábád, and Házáreebágh, leaving out the greater atrocities at Cawnpore, Delhi, and Meerut altogether. Where were your stanch and true sepoys and zemindárs in those places giving proofs of their unquestionable attachment for us? Attachment! Yes; they have exhibited such attachment as the boa-constrictor shows for the animal it swallows, by first lubricating it with its saliva."

"Well, the times certainly are out of joint, and you have some reason for your bad opinion, doubtless. The massacres you allude to were particularly atrocious; but instances of faithfulness were not wanting even in the places mentioned."

"As how? Let us have your version of the events, pray. It will doubtless be of great assistance to the future historian, particularly if he be as sentimental as you are."

"Well, as to that, I think I am not half so sentimental as I ought to be. The subject is a very serious one. We are traducing a whole nation for the crimes of particular classes only. As for instances of faithfulness, they are too many to be remembered. In Báreilly, Captain Cameron escaped with the assistance of some of his men, and he himself wrote up to the Government that there were thirty other Christians who had been similarly saved by the Hindu inhabitants of Báreilly, Budáon, and Sháhjehánpore. In Jounpore, Mr. Gliddon was sheltered by two natives named Rámprogáus and Hingunláll. At Futtoghurh, Mr. Cumberland and forty other Europeans found protection with a Hindu zemindár named Hurdeo Bux. At Fyzábád, Major Fanthome, his wife, and his daughter found refuge with a Mahomedan chief named Názim Meer Mahomed Khán, who admitted them even into his zenáná for protection!"

"But with what motives?" asked Pat, with a sinister sneer. "The very men the Názim sent out to rescue the fugitives abused and maltreated them. Had not the wily Mahomedan his own objects to serve?"

"None that casts a stigma on his character. In times so perilous even a chieftain cannot fully control his subordinates; and doubtless the servants of the Názim did maltreat the fugitives so long as they had them in their power. But this ceased the moment they were brought before their chief. He first hid them in his fort, but when that got wind, and an alarm was given that a large party was coming to search for them, the ladies were at once taken into the zenáná, which a Mahomedan holds particularly sacred, and the major was hid in a dark woodgodown, all dressed in the native fashion to insure their security, and it was in this dress that they were quietly conveyed by the Názim's men to the opium factory at Bustee."

"This certainly was very kind of the Mahomedan," exclaimed Mrs. Carbery. "But do you think the story true? I detest these Mahomedans, and am loath to believe that they can be honest."

"Ah! my good lady, we liked them well enough though before the mutiny broke out. We considered them to be humbler and more respectful than the Hindus, and not less attached to us—"

"Till we were betrayed," said Carbery, "and found out our mistake."

"Then again," continued McGavin, without heeding the interruption, "there is the case of the farrier-sergeant Spink, who, escaping from Fyzábád, first found refuge in a village of Bráhmans, where he received needful refreshments. He was thence chased by Bully Sing, a rebel, who dragged him out by the hair from a heap of straw within which he had hid himself, and then marched him on from village to village, with the rabble at his heels hooting at and abusing him. But attachment to us soon appeared in the shape of Thákoor Sing, the brother of Bully Sing, who actually quarrelled with him on behalf of the white man, which led to Spink being saved."

"Well," said Carbery, "there may have been one or two cases of this description, in most of which the poor befriended us, not from any particular attachment to us, but knowing that we always reward the slightest service lavishly."

"The poor!" exclaimed McGavin; "in times so hard it is not in the power of the poor to afford much assistance, though they have certainly strained every nerve to do what little they could. We are indebted to all classes for much kindness, which we ought to acknowledge with thankfulness. In Gwálíor it was the Rájáh who informed the Political Agent that the whole of the troops (Scindia's contingent) were disaffected. The wretches had sworn on Ganges water and the Korán to stand by each other, maltreat the English ladies, and kill all Christians, men, women, and children. Did we know anything about it? It was the Rájáh who advised the ladies being sent off to the Residency for protection, and the officers to be prepared for escape. At Hyderábád ten thousand Mahomedans had assembled at a mosque uttering seditious

cries, but were put down by Salár Jung and his Arabs. Everywhere, Mrs. Carbery, wherever a European life has been saved, it has been rescued by the natives, be they of high or low degree."

"They have at least found a good advocate in you, Bill. I dare say you will next contend that it is we that have rebelled against the natives. Eh!"

"That is a large question, and not hurriedly disposed of. We have certainly not treated them as they had a right to be treated by us. But that is not our present thesis. You asked me to cite instances of faithfulness, and I have mentioned such as have occurred to me. In Házárecbágh, and in other places also, the native officers remained steadfast even after their men had risen. 'Don't fear, Sáheb,' said Subadár Byjenáth Sing to Captain Abbott; 'for every drop of water that falls from your eyes they shall shed twenty drops of my blood before any harm shall come to you!'"

"And how was this vaunt justified, Bill? Pray, go on with your illustration."

"The vaunt was fully justified. 'Better service can no man render than this, that he laid down his life for his friend.' A short while after the conference the Captain's *kitmutgár* brought word to him that the sepoys were '*biger gyá*,' that is, had gone wrong, that they had broken the bell-of-arms and seized their muskets, and that they were running up to murder him. 'But where are the officers who promised faithfulness?' Now mark the reply, Pat. 'Two of them, Subadár Byjenáth Sing and Jemádár Runjeet Sing, who were running up to tell you, have been seized and are about to be killed. Fly, or we shall be too late.'"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE OTHER SIDE.

“WELL, you have had your say, Bill. Now let us see the other side of the picture. You have not alluded to the Cawnpore massacre at all, nor to the almost equally fearful massacres at Meerut and Delhi: advisedly, I take it; yet the others to which you have referred, differed from them only in the extent of the mischief committed, not in their character. The murder of women and children has been very common everywhere. Many children were dashed to the ground, in Astyanax fashion, by the infuriated sepoy; in some villages children's shoes were found with the feet still in them, violently cut off. Barbarities like these brand the character not only of those who were actually guilty of them, but of all others who tolerated them. Even where ‘attachment’ for us has been evinced—I thank you, Bill, for the word—the proportion of avowed rebels to those who were reticent was never less than fifty per cent. At Rohinee the troops did *not* rebel, and yet one officer was killed and two wounded—one of the latter being *scalped* as neatly as any Red Indian could have done it. Kooer Sing, hunted out of Jugdespore, forced his way into the country of a *friendly* rájá, where he was allowed to hatch further treason with impunity, for all the ‘attachment’ of that other rájá for us.”

“Stop a bit there, Pat, and take breath. The conspiracy that Kooer Sing did get up in that friendly rájá's territory did not fructify, simply because he could not get either the rájá or his relatives (the Thákoors) to back him.”

“Aye, doubtless it was so; for the old foxes were of course too wary to commit themselves. The same story has been repeated in other places in other ways. Chiefs who have been assisting us in escorting our baggages and

stores, in collecting carts and transport animals, nay, even in raising forces to fight for us, have also been found to have corresponded with and assisted our enemies; just to keep their bacon safe on both sides of the fire, you know. Father and son have been known to join different sides for the very same reason, which only betrays a villainous method in their 'attachment' for us which is particularly edifying."

"But, my dear Pat, you don't make allowances for their position. The chiefs who corresponded with both parties were in reality perfectly loyal to us. Their conduct was never uncertain, so far as we were concerned, though they were obliged at times to mask it, that is, when they were not able to resist armed men, drilled and disciplined by ourselves, who had made themselves masters of the whole country around them for the time. Was this a crime? They had families of their own to protect from insult, properties to save from spoliation. We, their masters, were utterly impotent to help them. How else could they have acted in such an emergency?"

"Their motives, Bill, are unknown. What they did was perfectly indefensible. It compelled us to hesitate whether we should trust them or not; it encouraged our enemies, who understood their correspondents much better of course than we did."

"But if we have different reports of their conduct •• from equally competent authorities," put in Mrs. Carbery, "they are entitled to the benefit of the doubt that arises in their favour, are they not, Pat?"

"No, my love. Don't let Bill try to persuade you that they were aught but arrant knaves. It is this principally that makes me so apprehensive of our position; we don't know whom to trust! Besides those who have declared themselves as our enemies, we are surrounded by vast numbers of men who are certainly not friendly to us, who are perhaps now conniving with our avowed enemies, and whom anything—the merest trifle—would induce to join them openly."

"And who may these be, Pat?" asked Bill.

"Oh! their name is legion. There are the Wáhábees in Pátná; the Ferázees in Dáccá, Furreedpore, and even as near us as Baraset; the Ooriyáhs in Pooree—"

"The Ooriyáhs!" exclaimed McGavin in astonishment. "Do you really believe that the Ooriyáhs can rise up to fight?"

"Why not? One hundred and fifty-thousand men, more or less, will assemble in Pooree during the Jagga-náth festival, and they will have among them those fire-brands, the missionaries, who will be preaching to them, in season and out of season, the glad tidings of the Messiah. Where the plea of rebellion is that we are endeavouring to make Christians of all, and to take away their castes, what better pretext can they have than such preaching to declare themselves against us?"

"But I thought the Government had prohibited the missionaries from preaching this season. Is it not so?"

"The Government cannot prohibit preaching. It has appealed to the good sense of the missionaries to avoid putting fire to flax; but will the missionaries listen to the dictates of common sense?"

"Oh me!" cried out Mrs. Carbery in alarm, "if the Ooriyáhs revolt our Sirdár Bearer here will be murdering us; and there is the Mate Bearer again, who has charge of the children!"

"Never fear, ma'am; the Ooriyáhs will never fight or slay; the Bengalis and the Ooriyáhs, when most aggrieved or in fear, will swamp the Government Secretariats with petitions, and the law-courts with suits for redress. We are quite safe from both these races, are we not, Pat?"

"But who are the others of whom Pat spoke just now?" interrupted Mrs. Carbery; "who are the Hábábees and the Farábees?"

"Oh, the Wáhábees of Pátná," said McGavin, "are a very peculiar brotherhood, of whom the most peculiar feature is their fanatical devotion to their spiritual leaders. The large number and unquestioning submission of their

followers make, dangerous; but these leaders and the whole sect very common cause up to this time they have not made will. The understanding with the mutineers, and perhaps never so perfect, and their fidelity to each other is so staunch, common action communicate with one another, and take inhabit, without together throughout the entire area they of their conspiracy any letter being written, or any chance that, if the conspiracy being detected; and there is no doubt unwilling to first came to the worst, they would not be Mahomedans, to merge all their differences with other Ma-

"Oh dear, join in a crusade against us."

"Upon a moment!" exclaimed Mrs. Carbery, "why, we grant knavery, then, and that prepared for us by those you knew as the Mahomedans! Fie, Mr. McGavin!

"I was all this, and could speak well of them." "I wanted to speaking, ma'am, of the Mutiny, and I only to be guilty discriminate between those who were known that question of it and those who were not. Apart from fanatics, and we know of course that the Mahomedans are the sword and are at all times ready to deal damnation and

"Their to those who do not acknowledge their Prophet." tion; but Prophet be d—d," said Mrs. Carbery in irritation; but instantly recollecting herself, she turned round to her husband

"Ask husband to ask who the Ferázees were. represent McGavin, my dear. He will best be able to best explain his friends. His own delineation of them will

"Well, Mr. McGavin, are these Ferázees also your friends?"

"In have no sense, ma'am, they are; that is, since they of Dacca not quiet up to this time. The Ferázee population dangerous, Furreedpore, and Baraset are perhaps equally notable as with the Wáhábées; but they have no leader of Meáh, this moment. The son of their old leader, Teetoo dangerous, exists, and is styled 'Sháh Zádá,' but he is not a sufficient man. Their other leader, Doodoo Meáh, has suffered under the law. The real head of the sect now in

lower Bengal is one Abdool Sobhán, a well-educated and clever man, who preaches weekly to large assemblies. He does not appear to be a man likely to become troublesome, though, we don't know, of course, what he would do some, though, we don't know, of course, what he would do if the opportunity arose. In the north-east, in Jounpore, there is another party of the Ferázee Ali, who is the lead of a Moulavi named Kerámut Ali, who is the chief priest of the clan. Of this man we know that he saved two English maidens, the Misses Malcolm, from the mob, and placed them in safety in the fort; so that, so far as our information goes at present, we have no thing to complain of these sects in connection with the mutiny, though, being bigoted Mussulmans, they most undoubtedly detest us cordially.

"And," added Carbery, "are sure to rise if they can find an opportunity to do so."

"Would it not then be safest for us," said Mrs. Carbery, "to remove at once to the shipping for protection?"

Chowringhee, with its Mahomedan *bustees*, seems scarce to be a safe place for us now."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A MURDER, AND A RECRUIT.

A DRIVE of ten minutes from Chowringhee would bring the reader to the black-town of Calcutta, where, in the magnificent residence of the De Mullicks, in one of the dirtiest streets of the metropolis, an angry man was plotting the death of his own father, while the heroes of the country around him was passing through the same house a convulsion. The hour was past midnight, and the whole room was hushed and dark, except that one small apartment was faintly lighted by a native *chirág*. The apartment was not well furnished, though there were several articles of costliness and luxury scattered about it. I

occupant was the young man referred to, whose ill-regulated mind appeared to have been recently disturbed in an unwonted degree by some disagreement with his father, and on whose features the fatal sign of inordinate anger was still struggling visibly.

There was a slight tap at the door at this moment.

"Did master call?" was the simple query of the man who entered.

"Ah! Did I call you, Ojáh?" answered De Mullick. "It must have been so, then; but my passions are beyond my mastery now, and I know not what I called you for."

"Master seems much vexed and wounded," returned the servant. "Master's eyes are glaring wildly. If there be any difficulty that I can remove, master may always command me."

"Mock me not," said the young man hurriedly. "What service canst thou render me in my present difficulty? I feel the old man like a thorn at my side. I cannot remove that thorn; can you?" The voice of the young man trembled as he spoke, and his last words sank into a scarcely audible whisper.

"I can," was Ojáh's firm reply; but young De Mullick seemed staggered by its very briefness. He cast a hurried look around him, and with a trembling hand pulled out a well-filled purse.

"There, there! Don't hurt him; that is not what I mean. This will be doubled to you every year as long as I live."

Ojáh took the gold, but gave no reply. Two days after the senior De Mullick was waylaid and murdered, in an obscure alley of a petty village, by a masked man who was hotly pursued, but never taken. His son received the news as a pistol-shot through the heart. His dizzy brain swam and reeled, and he was never seen to smile again. Friends and neighbours pitied him that he felt his loss so severely; but other faces peered on him less kindly in the dark, and he heard other sounds that chased slumber from his eyes.

Large rewards were offered for the apprehension of the murderer, many surmises thrown out of his motive for the crime, and the myrmidons of the police actively engaged for a long time in unravelling the mystery; but all to no purpose, the enigma was never explained. 'A *Sunnyási*, who a few days after passed out of the village where the crime was perpetrated, was traced from temple to temple, almost all over Bengal, till all clue of him was lost on the way to Lucknow. Was he killed by the mutineers, or did he die red-handed fighting against the English? Who can tell!

"A strange-looking man," said Gungádeen to Dabeebux, "has been hanging on our rear for the past few days; he is perhaps a spy of Máu Sing. Shall we send him to his last account?"

"Not in a hurry. First get hold of him. Your roving blades make good recruits, and perhaps he may be of service to us."

The man was captured, and, though of great personal strength, did not resist.

"Who and what are you?"

"A soldier, and in want of service."

"A soldier! To what regiment did you belong?"

"That does not matter. I am able-bodied, and can give a soldier's service."

"But it does concern us to know whom we enlist."

"My name is Sáhebrám, and I come from Behár."

"Have you nothing further to mention?"

"Nothing, but that I am in want, and will take any service."

"Ah! physical want to a man of your size is a portentous evil, and we are willing indeed to relieve it. But our position makes us suspicious. We cannot take into our service every vagabond we come across, lest we be betrayed."

"Betrayed? To whom? If you mean the British Government and their partisans, I have even greater reason to fear them than you have."

"That will do," said Dabeebux; "we have lived long enough in the world to understand each other now. Let him be enlisted, and the usual oath administered."

Sáhebrám had really been a soldier at one time of his life—a bold soldier, but a bolder villain. He had, however, the trick of making friends; his conversation was unshackled and free, but never repellent; and he soon made friends, not only with the Hávildár, but also with Shunkur and Probhoo.

"Revenge! Revenge is a feast for the gods," said he; "and I would gladly share your dangers, and help you in obtaining it, if you will allow me."

"Fully and cordially," was Shunkur's reply. And so the four became sworn friends.

CHAPTER XIX.

BEFORE LUCKNOW, AND AWAY FROM IT.

THE enemy were in immense force at Lucknow, and the works round the city were really formidable. All the great chiefs—Mussulman and Hindu—had sworn to fight for young Birjis Kádder to the last. The great bulk of the sepoy army was there, and the army of the king was not undisciplined. Over and above all this was the Begum, a woman of great energy and ability, ardent, intriguing, and passionately devoted to the cause of her son.

The English in Lucknow had lost everything but two positions, namely, the Residency and Munchee Bhowán; but several detachments were coming to their rescue from different directions. Sir James Outram's forces were the first to arrive, but soon found themselves in as bad straits as those whom they had come to relieve. It was not till General Havelock joined them that any well-founded hopes of success were entertained.

It would be beyond our purpose to notice here all the hard fighting that occurred. Both the mutineers and the king's army fought well; but the joint attacks of Outram and Havelock, from two distinct positions, were more than they could withstand. The Begum, still undismayed, encouraged her followers with a smiling face, and they, though fully satisfied that they were losing ground, fought on with unabated zeal, dying sword in hand in the streets.

Of the many bands that fought so resolutely one of the stanchest was that commanded by Dabeebux.

"They run, they run!" cried Gungádeen, when he saw one of the parties they were opposed to give way.

"Press on them and cut them down," said Dabeebux. "Brave Hávilár, and you, Shunkur, Probhoo, and Sá-hebrán, press on. Well have you earned the glory of this day."

The feint of the English detachment was, however, not ineffective. They had wished and succeeded in drawing off a great body of the besieging force from before the Residency; after which they effected their retreat in excellent order, while their undisciplined opponents were dispersed in different directions. Dabeebux kept together his men as well as he could, and, hearing that Náná Sáheb was hard beset in the jungle-fort of Churdá, he went off in that direction to aid him. This move was suggested by the Hávilár, who had traced his captain-of-the-cane among those in pursuit of the hero of Bithoor; but it was a long time before the party could come up to Náná, as he was constantly changing his position. Many stray detachments of English soldiers were met with on the way. Dabeebux did not always encounter them face to face; he preferred to hang on their rear and harass them: and his movements were so well-timed that he gave them no rest.

It was about noon on a moist day in August that they came up to the bank of a rivulet, or *nulláh*, in the neighbourhood of Náuparáh, within a short distance of the

position occupied by Náná Sáheb. In front of them was a small body of British troops, rather strongly posted, and protected by guns in position; but the rebels were in greater strength, and understood their advantage, and, directing their attack with pluck and ability, were soon in the midst of their adversaries. The onset was maintained with great courage, and though the English guns returned the enemy's fire briskly, the English detachment was compelled to break ground. Flushed with their success, the rebels pressed on, while the English, keeping up a running fight, fell back towards a dense jungle that afforded them a safe retreat. The loss among them was comparatively heavy, and night only put a stop to the fight.

On arriving at the base of one of the jungle-slopes Sáhebrám saw a man hiding behind a bush. He told him to come out, but no reply being received, he called Shunkur and the Hávildár, and all three went forward to capture the skulker. Sáhebrám seized the man's musket when he was just on the point of full-cocking it, after which he was easily taken. He begged hard for mercy, and Shunkur was for granting it, when Probhoo, having come up, recognised him as the wretch Mackenzie, one of the two miscreants they had been looking after so long. No words were now wasted; he was deliberately stabbed to the heart by the brother of his victim.

.. "Oh, my poor sister!" exclaimed Probhoo, "thy wrongs can never be fully avenged; but this is all that we can do to vindicate thy worth:" and he then hung the corse on a tree for kites to peck at.

"One villain is now disposed of," said Shunkur; "we have another yet to find out."

"Not so," said the Hávildár; "there remain two still to hunt for. That was the bargain, friends, we made."

"Two more surely," said Probhoo, "before our work is done."

"Is it so?" exclaimed Sáhebrám. "But my work, when and how will that terminate?"

CHAPTER XX.

TIT FOR TAT.

GENERAL NEILL had now taken command at Cawnpore, and was proving how heroically the English could repay the cowardly brutality of the rebels and mutineers.

"Whenever a rebel is caught," said he, "we shall try him and hang him at once if he cannot prove a defence. But the chief rebels and ringleaders—they shall first clean the blood they have shed, and then pay the penalty of their crimes."

This vigour was much lauded by the local English papers and community of the day. "The word 'Mercy,'" said the Rev. Dr. Bluff, "was never intended to be made applicable to fiends." "The Bible," remarked the amiable editor of the *Hurryrámpore Weekly*, "expressly says that Canaan is cursed and doomed to be a servant of servants; also that the children of Japheth were born to rule over those of Shem." It was in vain that one or two learned missionaries pointed out that the Bible was being misquoted and misrepresented; that the revengeful and relentless feelings displayed were utterly unchristian and unjustifiable. The display of vigour had come into fashion, and no homily had any chance of being listened to.

"Three prisoners to-day, sir!" reports Corporal Quinn; "one a Mahomedan, one a Hindu of substance, and the third a sepoy."

"Hang them all on the nearest tree," replies the commanding-officer. "The Mahomedan must be a traitor; the Hindu, since he has substance, must have acquired it unfairly; and the sepoy is necessarily a mutineer."

Two Mahomedans were shot because they had scowled on Lieutenants Taperley and Smogton, who had merely set fire to their huts; and the punishment was justified by the verdict of a court of inquiry. Villages were burnt without any precautions being taken to rescue the

women and children from the common destruction, lest such leniency should be misunderstood. Miss Jemima and Miss Fitzbuggins shook their pretty little fists at manacled sepoy, and called them 'niggers,' and officers dressed in scarlet and gold applauded them for doing so. The angry Britons not only fought with the sepoy, but also with Coolies and Khánsámás, nay, even with Ma-thránis—so they were ill-looking. Rájáh Binodilál's house was searched, and a large booty collected, for he was a rich man, and had an immense quantity of gold, silver, and shawls. Was he not a traitor? The man was so ill-favoured that he could not possibly be otherwise. He protested against the inference, and no arms or munitions of war were found in his house. But lo! among some papers was found a prayer addressed to Mahádeva, beseeching him to assist the devotee in the destruction of Europeans! Was not this enough? The man disclaimed all knowledge of the paper, and pointed to the folly of supposing that even a traitor should write such an effusion at such a time and leave it so exposed to be cited against himself. Stuff! British soldiers were not going to stand such nonsense! The rájáh was strung up, and the booty partitioned! Irádut Jehán and Fasáhut Jehán, two obstinate rebels, gave great trouble before they were caught and hung. To strike salutary terror among all similar miscreants their women were given up to the soldiers, and many of them died of the injuries they received!

"Is Rám Sing stanch and true? It looks suspicious, for he was seen to have joined the Oude insurgents on one occasion."

"Oh, there is no doubt about him; he is true as steel," was the reply. "He only joined the Oude men on hearing that, the rebels having been defeated, the British forces were about to disgrace the seraglio of the Nawáb. He had eaten the Nawáb's salt, and marched to protect the women."

Be it so; the question did not admit of careful sifting.

This at least was certain, that it was not expedient to doubt Rám Sing's fidelity, and see his strength and influence enlisted on the wrong side !

"Who was it ? Was it not Captain Ahern who, having taken the fortress of Meetágurh, ordered all the garrison, including the sick and the infirm to be hung, and all the people of the neighbourhood to be cut down !"

"Yes ; prompt and decisive measures were necessary, and he did not hesitate. A brave soldier was Ahern, his country's pride. 'Revenge on the miscreants !' was his war-cry, and he did his work well."

The judgments of heaven are usually slow ; but in the case of the Indian Mutiny they were unusually quick and vigorous. Why does Britannia look brooding and sorrowful ? Does she regret all that was done in her name ?

CHAPTER XXI.

NÁNÁ'S FLIGHT, AND SHUNKUR'S REVENGE.

NÁNÁ has been compelled to retreat before his enemies, and is approaching the confines of Nepál. The snowy range rises before him, and intermediately on the slopes of the mountains are forests of untold depths inhabited by tigers, in which man has never set foot. In the ravines formed by the course of innumerable torrents are paths unknown except to a few ; but these are yet destined to be trodden by many who in their dream of dreams had never anticipated such fate.

"Death is better than this suspense," said Náná, "and I shall throw myself before the first tiger I come across ; for in my present condition it will be a satisfaction even to be torn up by a wild beast."

"You shall not do so, my love," said his good and faithful wife. "Am I not with you, and must you not protect and cherish me ?"

Náná spoke not. Oh! for the love of woman, has it anything equal to it in life? Náná clasped his wife to his heart, and they were happy—happy in the hollows and gaps of the mountains within which they were crouching like hares—happier in their concealment within the long jungle-grass than they had ever been in the palace of Bithoor.

But they were hard beset. A few adherents still remained with them, but their demeanour towards them had already become cold. The enemies behind them were stronger and more alert; but they had, fortunately for the fugitives, no one to guide them through the ravines.

"Hush! who is that? Captain Neville, is it you?"

"Yes, Bernard. But how is it that you have groped through your way hither?"

"Ah, the same talisman has drawn us both. Náná's life is worth his weight in gold."

"But who shall have the gold, then; you or I?"

"We shall divide it between us, my boy; let us help each other."

"Ha! Divide the reward, and with thee, when I have hunted my game so far alone? No, Bernard, you are a blockhead to think of it! Go back from the pursuit, or I shall settle the difficulty with you here."

"Why, you provoking fool, how over-hot you are! Are you so sure of capturing the Náná alone that you refuse to receive my assistance on the only terms I could offer it? Náná has arms, and knows how to use them."

"He has arms to use against cowards. But that is neither here nor there. Will you go back or not?"

"But I cannot, Neville, really I cannot, because I don't know my way. I have quietly groped up after you. How can I get back alone?"

"By heavens! you madden me. If you remain with me I will stab you to the heart."

"No, you must not. I will stay with you to assist you, if you want my help, but not to advance any claim on your reward."

"Swear!"

"I do." And he repeated after Neville the oath that the latter dictated to him.

"But they are two there, I see. It is fortunate, Neville, that I came."*

"Hush! don't speak loud. They are only man and wife."

"Wife! Náná's wife, and in the Terái?"

"Yes."

"Then we can yet divide the prize. You take Náná; I, his wife."

"What will you do with her?"

"Oh, never mind that. Do you agree to give her up to me?"

"I do; for I don't want her myself."

It was quite dark, and no assistance was near; and simultaneously Náná and his wife felt the strong grasp by which each was held down. A faint shriek burst forth from the lips of the latter; while the former, drawing out his dagger, used it with better effect. The stroke was well-aimed, and Captain Neville let go his hold, upon which Náná ran forward, and was lost in the intricacies of deeper jungles and ravines. In the meantime his wife screamed loudly in the arms of Bernard, till he stunned her by a blow. But the consummation of further wickedness was prevented by the arrival of the assistance the lady's cries had called up; and in the next moment Bernard was struggling within the strong grasp of Shunkur, from which he never came out alive.

"Again at your old crime, caitiff? Was not one victim enough?"

"Let go my windpipe, knave. Wherefore wilt thou murder me?"

"Is thy victim of Soorájpore forgotten? Behold her husband and avenger in me! The prince of Bithoor may be unmindful of his wife; but the poor clown of Soorájpore knows how to avenge the woman who had lain by his side." A wild gleam of satisfaction shot

across the features of the avenger, his hold on Bernard's necktie was tightened, and the next moment that villain was a corse.

"Save me! hide me!" cried the wife of Náná, startled from her swoon.

"I will, lady, since I have been so fortunate as to rescue thee."

Very opportunely had Shunkur arrived at the spot; but he had not come alone. Sáhebrám, Probhoo, the Hávilár, and Shunkur had, all four, detached themselves from the bulk of their party with the especial object of coming up to the personal assistance of Náná Sáheb, and it was after fighting dreadful odds that they were able to approach him. Leaving Bernard in Shunkur's grasp, Sáhebrám had pushed on after Náná himself, and neither was seen again, both probably having proceeded on to Nepál, though it was never known for certain that they reached it. The Hávilár's attention was first drawn to Captain Neville, whom he recognised at once as his captain-of-the canoe. But Náná's stab had settled his long account, and seeing that nothing now remained for him to do, the Hávilár determined to follow in Náná's wake, as he had no hopes of protection on English ground.

"Oh! take me with thee, good old man," cried out Náná's wife; "take me to my husband. I also have no home or refuge in India; and if I prove a burden to thee on the way, kill me, and leave my body on the roadside for the wild animals to feed upon. Even that is better than that I should fall into the hands of such enemies as he from whom thy comrade has delivered me."

"Yes, lady; the course you have chosen is the best for you. I shall take care of you as if you were my own child; and, if any can, I shall be able to replace you by the side of your husband."

"And we," said Probhoo, who had just come up, "whither shall we go after all we have done?"

"Return to your home at Soorájpore," said the

Hávildár, "to the old mother and little boy you have left behind. Forget your connection with these bloody doings, and no one else will remember them against you."

"The Hávildár speaks well," said Shunkur. "There is no further motive for the life we were obliged to adopt: let us go back to our cheerless home."

THE TIMES OF YORE;

OR,

TALES FROM INDIAN HISTORY:

FROM THE INVASION OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT TO THE
BATTLE OF PÁNIPUT.¹

THE DESTRUCTION OF RUNG MAHIL.

SOME centuries ago the northern regions of the Indian desert, even to the banks of the Sutledge, were inhabited by the Johyás, a race of hill-tribes whose very name is now extinct. They appear to have been the same as the Jenjooheh mentioned in the commentaries of Báber, and were in power from the very dawn of Indian antiquity. Amongst them there were no farmers or merchants, for they were all born and bred up to war; and they were subdivided under independent chiefs, who ruled independently of each other in times of peace, but always confederated their strength in danger, under the command of some chosen leader of their race.

At the time when the Macedonian conqueror invaded

¹ It is perhaps necessary to mention that these tales were originally published some thirty-three years ago, and represent the author's *first* attempts to write in English. As an apology for their reproduction the author would add that some of them have, recently, been translated into Bengali by other writers, and with the alteration of a few names, appropriated without acknowledgment, and passed off as their own.

India, Sancara was the great chief of his tribe. He had one thousand hardy veterans under his own authority; but, at the hour of peril, could command the services of seven thousand more, all well-built and strong, and used to the services of the field; and he was in the prime of life, and powerful, and many were the princes who envied his fame.

The capital of Sancara was Rung Mahil; a goodly city, the ruins of which are yet visible. Those ruins now stand in the midst of the great Indian desert, surrounded by hills of sand and a lonely region of death; but tradition still asserts that the tracts about them were neither arid nor desolate when the Cággar was a living stream. Nay, it is even affected that Bikáneer was, in ancient times, famous for its fertility and vegetation, and that Rung Mahil, which stood on the banks of the river, was one of the fairest capitals of the age.

Who desolated its lofty halls, who struck down its aspiring towers, who converted the city of the Johyás into a heap of rubbish and stones? The historic student finds no answer to these questions in the chronicles of old; there is nothing on record about them in the annals of time; no facts have been handed down to us in respect to them by the narrators of the past. But tradition imputes the destruction of the city to the lawless hand of the Macedonian—his motives, lust and plunder.

The chroniclers of Alexander have indeed been very silent on the subject; but, as the act did not much rebound to the credit of the hero, their silence is easily accounted for. Greater oppression and cruelty even Alexander does not appear to have been guilty of than in his treatment of the Johyás; and to spare his memory from the condemnation of future ages was evidently the object of his historians in refraining from alluding to it. Aristotle, in his "*Secretum Secretorum*," speaks of a queen of India having treacherously sent to Alexander, among other rich presents, a girl of exquisite beauty, who, having been fed on serpents from her infancy,

partook of their nature: and Ælian in his "Various History" mentions a serpent which, appearing from the mouth of a cavern, stopped the march of Alexander's army through a spacious desert. Both these fables have reference to the reduction of Rung Mahil, and yet the history of that event has never been told.

Tradition has, however, in this case, amply compensated for the deficiency of authentic information. The tale is wild, but it corresponds in every respect with the character of Alexander and the incidents of his history; nor shall we venture to affirm that it has no foundation in truth. We give the story as it stands; let those reject it who may.

Never since the mother of mankind walked unadorned in the garden of Eden, had a lovelier female been born on the earth than Ársi, the daughter of Sancara, the chief of the Johyás. To say that her eyes were large and lustrous, that her curls were of jet and in long tresses fell down nearly to her knees, that her face and person were comely with health, were to say too little indeed of her charms. Of that ideal beauty which belonged to her, neither the chisel, nor the brush, nor the pen has ever been able to convey an adequate idea. Hers was the loveliness of the fabled goddesses of her native land; to her belonged everything that was good and beautiful.

Nor was a mate worthy of the young princess wanting among the Johyás. Bulnath was the son of Pujan, one of the brothers in arms of Sancara, and a handsome specimen of a Johyán youth. A prince in his own country, he would have been accounted noble in any part of the world; and he was well-formed and manly, to such extent that an ordinary critic of beauty would perhaps have sought in vain for an imperfection in him. High-born and well-bred, he was a credit to his race, the admiration of his subjects, and the pet of dames, aristocratic and low. But he cared for no opinion but that of Ársi; Ársi was his only love.

When children they had played together, mutually

attracted by a feeling which they did not understand. That feeling had gradually grown into love; and they loved each other the more that their parents wished it. Of nothing in the world was Sancara more desirous than of getting Bulnáth for his son-in-law, for he was a noble hero for his years; and good reason had Pujan to be proud of the choice of his son, which promised him both happiness and honour. The betrothal had already been formally solemnized according to the customs of the country, and the wedding-day had been fixed, when intelligence reached Rung Mahil of the arrival of a foreign foe on the banks of the Niláb. Now was no time for merriment and joy, and the marriage of Bulnáth with Ársi had therefore to be deferred.

* * * * *

“Ársi, my dearest, look out on the night; see how the stars are glittering in heaven. Oh, that this were our wedding-night, Ársi!”

“No, Bulnáth, no. The lustrous moon is absent; she will not rise to-night. On our bridal-night she should be present in the heavens to witness our joy.”

“Thou wilt be the moon of that night, my dearest. I never miss the moon while gazing on thy charms.”

“And oh, my brave and devoted lover, does not Ársi read the stars in thine eyes?”

“Then let the bridal-night be dark as thine ebon hair, my loveliest, we will have the moon and the stars still amongst us, Ársi!”

The youthful pair had wandered out of the city to hear the song of the nightingale on the banks of the Cággar; and the murmur of the stream, the warbling of birds, and the perfumed odour of the breeze had detained them beyond the evening hour. They feared not there the trail of the enemy, nor the wild beasts of the desert. The enemy was by all reports yet far off, nor was the wilderness nearer; and they were too much engrossed in each other to think of danger.

But strange sounds arose at a distance, and the voices

of men. The fawn, disturbed in his retreat in the thicket, bounded across their path in terror, and the melodious voices of birds soon changed into a harsh noise of complaint. Scared from their resting-places the cattle hurried hither and thither; and swarms of insects, but recently silenced by the shades of night, awoke again to raise the hum of alarm. Ársi looked on the face of her betrothed, and there was a wildness in his eyes that made her tremble; and his hand she saw was on his dirk. Removing the jet-black curls which waved over her ears, Ársi listened with anxious interest to the sounds afar. Her lover's practised ear had caught already what she now heard—the noise of distant drums; and through the trees was seen a flickering light, not of the fire-flies of the thicket, but the broken glare of torches.

“What means this sudden uproar, and why is thy brow so dark?” asked the princess of her lover, as she clung closer to his arm. “Is there danger in the distance. Speak, Bulnáth; your silence alarms me.”

“Danger for them that come, Ársi, not for us;” answered the young chief. “I hear the march of troops; but I guess their number is small, and Rung Mahil, even in peace, has warriors enough to beat them back.”

“But *we* are alone, and at a distance from the palace. List! the sound draws nearer.”

“Ársi, my arm is strong.”

Ársi felt that it was so, for she clung to it closely; but she represented to him forcibly their isolated position and distance from help, and prevailed on him to leave the spot without delay. Hand in hand they hastened along the margin of the Cággar; but before the city-gates were reached they fell in with danger. The enemy had sent scouts before them; and a party of four men intercepted their progress, when they were only a few paces from the nearest gate.

“Who goes there?” demanded Bulnáth of the advancing party.

“Nay, answer thou rather, who thou art,” was the

reply, "and who that lass is that thou art making love to in the dark."

"What, infidels here? I little thought you could steal so far upon us," said the prince; "but go back on your way, and tell your people that Rung Mahil is much too strong for their arms. Go back, I say; a prince permits you to return."

"A prince!—ha! Well, prince, your lass is a pretty one. A comely face has she, and a bright eye; and a smart sweetheart she would make in the camp. Do give her up, prince, and we go; and you have a Greek's word for it that we shall use her well."

Bulnáth heard no more. Releasing himself from the clasp of Ársi, he pounced like a tiger on the insulting Greek; and, before the braggart could defend himself, or the other Greeks so much as understood the scene and could interfere in it, he was dead, pierced through and through by the flashing steel of the indignant barbarian.

"Hold, you infernal robber!" exclaimed the comrades of the slain, their astonishment soon giving way to rage. But the deed was done, and Bulnáth stood cool and collected, wiping his bloody dagger. The Greeks in a body now rushed upon him, their eyes flashing fire and their faces white with rage; and Ársi, pale as death, dropped to the ground, raising a desperate shriek. The agility of the young Johyán scarcely enabled him to grapple with the fearful odds he combated, and his days would have been surely numbered had not the shriek of his betrothed aroused a timely friend. A large mountain-dog, the companion of their twilight wooings, had accompanied the youthful pair when they left the city-walls; but their courtship had grown long and the animal had fallen asleep, and the lovers had passed on without missing him. Ársi's cry awoke the faithful creature from his dreams, which even the distant stir of the army had not broken; and, with a tremendous growl, he sprang to the rescue of his master, attacking the boldest of his assailants, whom he brought down gasping to the ground. His sharp

fangs found sure hold on the throat of the Greek, all whose efforts to get free of his antagonist, or to kill him, were equally vain. The claws of the infuriated animal were almost as dreadful as his fangs, and more serviceable than the sword of the Greek, who lay writhing in torments beneath them and despairing of release.

Bulnâth had now only one enemy to deal with, the other having stolen away. Both the combatants were strong, agile, and youthful; both trained to the use of arms from their infancy; and the struggle was therefore somewhat prolonged. At last, grappling with each other, they staggered and fell, but so wearied were both that a few seconds elapsed before either could strike his opponent a finishing stroke. The steel of Bulnâth at last gained the heart of the Greek, when just at that moment he heard a scream from Ársi.

Why did Ársi scream so wildly? The fourth Greek had not fled. He had deserted his comrade to secure the girl, and his dirty hands were already around the fair daughter of Sancara, who had fallen to the ground. But the hands to help her had now become free, and the dog also had quitted hold of his adversary, now a senseless corpse. The Greek therefore abandoned his prize in haste to fly, upon which the dog sprang after him, and vain had been his attempts to escape if Bulnâth had not called the animal back.

“Go, coward, go!” he cried to the flying Greek; “thou wilt not venture so far again, I know. Go then, and tell thy people also to be wise, for this is a nest of hornets.”

* * * * *

Alexander lay with his army on the banks of the Niláb. He was reposing there after having won a great victory over some of the confederate princes of the Punjáb; and in his train were many of the captive beauties of Scinde, and many of its vanquished chieftains. Nor did this comprise the full extent of the outrage. His troops, undisciplined and unchecked, committed the most un-

bridled excesses on all sides, and their wanton violence was felt alike by the rich and poor, and was more dreaded than a pestilence. Every house and shed was obliged to give them quarters; and a comely face and a bright eye were always the soldier's prize. The bloodhounds at last got satiated with their success in the quarters where they lay, and now sighed for fresh fields and new pastures; and Alexander himself was growing impatient for further adventures. Just at this moment intelligence reached him of the defeat and repulse of a detachment of his army. He had sent a body of men to scour the country in the direction of Bikáneer. They had come in contact with the Johyás, and were overthrown.

It is a matter of extreme difficulty to form a correct opinion of the character of Alexander, diversely represented as it has been by the writers of the time. He was undoubtedly valiant, but much too rash and impatient to make a good general; and, over and above all this, he was excessively cruel, more so than any great hero of ancient or modern times.

"Repulsed and defeated!" shouted Alexander; "repulsed and defeated by barbarians! By Jupiter Ammon, every villain of them, victor and vanquished, shall find a bloody grave."

"But, please your majesty," pleaded Nearchas, "the fortunes of war depend as much on chance as on skill and valour. The best generals—"

"Enough, Nearchas, enough; I will hear no excuses. Leave the matter to me, and learn how to *command* the fortunes of war. What ho! Bessus!" (for he named his slaves after the princes he had vanquished) "harness Bucephalus early at dawn, and bid a large party of our personal guards to be ready for immediate service."

The next morning a large detachment of the Greek army was in motion, under the immediate lead of Alexander and his picked officers. The soldiers, nothing loath, struck up a favourite song to cheer the listlessness of the march; and a right merry song it was, whose melody

echoed far through the still air. And then the noonday came, and they halted, and then the sun went down; and then there was morning again, and the march continued; and thus for days they hurried on—the soldiers buoyed up with hope, their leader spurred on by passion.

It was the sixth day of marching. The sun was scorching hot; the hour for halting had nearly arrived. A fine country had been passed over, and they had reached the confines of a forest. Immediately before them was a cavern, whose mouth, commanding the entrance into the wood, seemed as it were an opening of hell, so pitch-dark it looked even at noon. A sharp fire of musketry was heard from within this dismal crater. To the superstitious soldiers it came as the warning of death. The noise was repeated. Groans and gasps of dread rose from the weary troops. "Forward!" shouted Alexander to his men; but those men, who had never disobeyed him, stood rooted to the spot.

"Jump on your horse, Perdiccas, and ride up to the mouth of the cavern," said Alexander, "and see what is there." Perdiccas did as he was ordered, but returned precipitately back.

"What did you find yonder to send you back in such haste?" was the sharp interrogation of the king.

"Barbarians, or devils, sire, I know not which, but they are there in large numbers to dispute our progress, and are armed with fire."

"Stand to arms, soldiers; we shall give them a warm reception were they armed with hell-fire."

"Useless trouble, sire; I do not think they will come out to receive it. Their only object is to prevent our progress."

"What is their strength?"

"I could not reckon, my liege. But there are as many savages in that den as there are ants on an ant-hill."

"Eumenes, press forward. They command the passage to the forest, and we must pass through them. Do you clear out the way."

Boldly did Eumenes attempt to press forward, and resolutely did his men tread after him. "To you has been committed the honour of opening the road, my children," said he to his soldiers; "show that you have deserved the trust:" and well did his men respond to the ardour of their chief. But the bravest must yield to impossibility. Eumenes was wounded; blood streamed copiously from the wound; and the intrepidity of his troops, no longer sustained by the lead of their favourite commander, began rapidly to succumb to the dictates of self-preservation. Even the stern king was now obliged to yield to circumstances; the march of the army was stopped, but the fire of his great soul burned the more within him. "Not long shall our savage enemies confine us here," said he; "and never shall it be recorded in the world's history that Alexander was stopped on his path by the savages of the desert."

A fortnight later Alexander found his way to Rung Mahil open before him. "I have saved my honour," joyously exclaimed the king. "The serpent that stopped me has fallen by his wile." He had fallen indeed, for he had been betrayed; not by his own men, but by a Greek, whose life he had spared twice, and whom he had afterwards taken into confidence. There was another secret entrance into the cave, in the heart of the forest. Bulnâth was surprised and caught in his lair; and he now awaited the orders of an incensed and implacable enemy.

"Hew him!" "Scourge him!" "Let him be quartered alive!" were the suggestions of the incensed soldiers who thronged around the unfortunate Johyân. But Bulnâth spoke not, nor did he evince the slightest fear. The generals of Alexander gazed at him with straining eyes. Even the stern Craterus was pleased with his haughty bearing; and Antigonus, Perdicas, and others ventured so much as to ask for his life.

"No," said the king, "there is danger in that glaring eye; if that boy is permitted to live Alexander himself might

fear a rival. He shall die!" And the intercessors, seeing that it was vain to persist, ceased to press their suit further.

"Well, barbarian, how wouldst thou wish to die?" asked Alexander, turning to Bulnáth. "Come, be quick, I have no time to lose."

"Grasping thee dead or dying in my arms."

"Ha! and much good that would do thee."

"As much as I care for."

"Carest not to live?"

"Yes, as a conqueror, with thee at my feet."

"By Libyan Jove! this is a bragging bully, not a chief! Go hang him on the next tree."

But here a Greek soldier stepped forward, with folded hands, before the king. It was the same who had ingratiated himself into Bulnáth's confidence and betrayed him; the same who, of the four that met Bulnáth single-handed, alone escaped alive.

"May it please your majesty," said he to the king, "to abandon him to my revenge. He has killed my brother, and I have had no vengeance yet."

The king smiled and gave him up.

"Take care, friend, that the punishment be a fitting one," said he, "lest thy brother's ghost should haunt thee;" and the punishment inflicted by the Greek was as cruel as his cruel master, in his most cruel mood, could have designed. Bulnáth was stripped naked, and his hands and feet tied together. He was then steeped in honey, and suspended from the branch of a tree over-populous with ants. Oh! the innumerable myriads of insects that came to feed on the dainty dish prepared for them. Oh! the excruciating agony of the death the Johyán died! The band struck up, and the march was continued.

After this, the Greeks poured on Rung Mahil like wolves on a fold. Sancara's eight thousand men were no match for the vast multitude that Alexander commanded. He approached the invader, with a flag of truce; but Alexander was too much exasperated to respect the rights of the ensign.

"The savage comes to seduce our men; strike him dead! down with the treacherous barbarian!" and stones and arrows flew about Sancara's head in such number that he was quickly brought down; and so great was the uproar and confusion that he was actually trampled to death, his clothes torn and rent, and his body disfigured and mutilated. The whole country of the Johyás was then sacked and plundered, and Rung Mahil reduced to a state of ruin. The domestic hearth was everywhere violated, and the death of the husband was a sure sign to the wife of deeper misery. The royal family only were spared such outrage on the forbearance being purchased by them. The queen of Sancara gave up her daughter—the serpent-fed princess of Aristotle—to her husband's murderer; and Alexander, who never gave anything for nothing, pleased with the present, acceded to her prayer.

History mentions the death of Alexander as having been occasioned by an over-indulgence in wine; but in this, as in many other cases similarly accounted for, poison has succeeded to pass by a less fearful name. The poison which deprived the Macedonian conqueror of his life was administered by Ársi, the daughter of Sancara, who had long waited for an opportunity to avenge the murder of her father and of her betrothed husband, the wrongs of her country, and her own sad and disgraced condition.

THE MERCHANT OF IRÁN.

THE beautiful moonlight! It was one of those delightful evenings which are only to be seen and properly appreciated in India. The sunset and its brief magnificence had just passed away, and not a ray now lingered where the day-god had gone down; while on the east, and from above the tree-tops, the moon, like a crown of glory, was shedding her silver radiance.

Alone in her apartment, within the royal castle of Kanouj, a beautiful girl was reclining on a couch, her long, dark hair straying in luxuriant negligence over her face, neck, and shoulders, and displaying her fair and healthy cheeks to peculiar advantage. The lattice of her window was open, and the streaming moonlight revealed a lady's apartment furnished with the utmost lavishness of taste and luxury. But the soft and brilliant black eyes of the maiden betrayed in their restless glances a longing wish to enjoy the beauty of the night beyond the walls which confined her. A well-laid garden reposed in calm beauty at the foot of the palace, and beyond it was a level plain, with a few gigantic trees scattered individually on its ample bosom, which stood like so many sentinels on their watch. There was stillness all around, save where some lovelorn *bulbul* complained in a flood of thrilling melody of the absence of her mate, or where some discontented cur howled his maledictions at the glorious moon. And the moonbeams slumbered on that beautiful meadow, mixed with the long shadows of the royal towers.

"How exquisite the night is!" murmured the royal maiden to herself, as her anxious eyes wandered over the tempting scene before her. "Oh, I am weary of this insipid life, of idling all day long and of sleeping away the livelong night. Would I had a friend with whom to while away my hours; would I had a companion to stroll with beneath the moonlight heavens!"

"You may have your wish, Anasuya," said a graceful matron, who, entering the room, had heard her silent murmurs. "I will bear you company, my child; I will be your friend."

The girl rose hastily from her couch, and, making obeisance to her mother, began to dress herself hastily for the stroll she had suggested; and then they sallied forth to enjoy the freshness of the night, and breathe the aroma of the moon-kissed flowers. The garden-grounds were rapidly passed over, and many a rosebud was severed from its little stem by fingers more delicate than its

delicate leaves. And now they traversed the meadows, and descried at a distance the silver waters of the winding Gungá, and heard the mirthful music and the hum of happy voices of persons who, like them, had stolen out of their houses to breathe the pure air. Sometimes a boisterous laugh or an uproarious shout was borne to them by the breeze, and sometimes, too, they caught the gentler conversation of people who were near. The talk of two garrulous old ladies in particular, who were walking a few paces before them, was clearly heard.

"What do you think, sister? our neighbour Hunifáh has after all got a husband for his daughter Bunnoo."

"A husband for Bunnoo! You don't tell me that? Why, the girl has pass'd her sixteenth year these four or five months, if my memory fails not, and who will marry her? They say, too, that she is not worth having now. Don't they?"

"Hush, neighbour, hush! But for all her defects, and her age to boot, she has got a husband, and such a beautiful husband too, sister, as would make you sigh to be a girl again, so you could woo him—a youth straight as a palm, fair as yonder moon, and as rich as the Kote-wál."

"I am really surprised to hear this. But stay, how did you come to know of it, sister? Tell me that."

"Know of it! Why all her neighbours know of it as well as I do. Have not I a pair of eyes in my head to see, what everybody sees, that every evening a tall, handsome young man lodges in Hunifáh's house, and goes out again in the morning to prosecute his traffic and business, and comes back again in the evening to eat and sleep there; and have not I a pair of ears to hear, what everybody hears, that he is as rich as a rájá, and buys and sells the costliest articles in the market?"

"Ah neighbour! all this may be true," said the other woman, very gravely; "but how do you make out that Bunnoo is married to this fine gallant?"

"If she is not, she must soon be, and that comes to the same thing; does it not?"

"No, no! it does not come to the same thing," answered the other, shaking her head; "this living together, and sleeping together, does not always lead to marriage, and, if report says true, Bunnoo knows that well. I wonder Hunifáh is not more wise than to be thus imposed upon. The whole neighbourhood will soon get into bad repute if this be not checked."

At this moment was heard a sound as unusual as it was startling, which stopped alike the talk of the mischief-working old ladies, and the voices of song and mirth. There was silence deep as death for a few seconds, and the queen and her daughter looked at each other in mute astonishment. Again that fearful note was repeated, and a cry of terror arose from all sides that the royal white elephant had broken loose; and behold! there he came thundering, tossing his formidable tusks and lashing his trunk, and snorting wildly in celebration of his freedom. The ladies were hardly able to endure the sight. Their limbs shook, and they dropped to the earth, as if bereaved of motion. Heaven shield them from a fearful doom!

Among the many who had been startled by those fearful sounds was a young cavalier, who, stretched on the margin of the Ganges, was watching with fixed eyes the silent loveliness and brilliancy of the moonbeams that slept on the royal towers, and hearing the gay songs and dreamy music wafted towards him by the evening breeze. He was alone; and by his side lay a massive bow of solid horn, which might have belonged to Ulysses or Janaka, so big it was in size, and a quiver wrought with curious devices, and well-replenished with arrows. From the fondness with which, ever and anon, he took these up and laid them down again, one would have been justified in concluding that all his affections were centred on them—that he had no other friends on earth.

No she-bear ever started with greater promptness in

defence of her young, when assailed by reckless hunters in her lair, than did this young cavalier start from his easy posture on hearing those unusual sounds. In a moment he was on his feet, poising his good bow in his hands, and yet irresolute whether to rush on the threatened danger, or to await its approach where he stood. But the shrieks of women, and the terror-stricken cries of men determined him in a moment, and, with the speed of thought, he took his stand at the foot of a tree, and, snatching a shaft from his quiver, lodged it on his bow-string, prepared every moment to dismiss it thence on its deadly errand. Just then he saw the elephant madly dashing towards the royal ladies. Swift sped the arrow, swift and sure. Another followed, and yet another, and all with the same unswerving precision struck the huge object of their aim. The animal was struck in the most sensitive parts. Snortings that seemed to rend the very heavens now rose into the air, and, after a few vain struggles, with fearful groans and a loud crash, he stumbled to the ground. A few faint struggles more, some further snortings, some kickings in the air, and he was dead.

The danger was now over; but mother and child still lay motionless on the earth. For a moment the stranger hesitated to run to their help; for a moment he hung entranced over their beauty; then, hastening to the river, he brought handsful of water, and bathed their temples; and, as they slowly opened their eyes, "Blessed be the God of my fathers," he cried, "may your eyes see light for ever!"

"But, stranger, who art thou, and where are we?" asked the queen of Kanouj of her deliverer, in tones of unfeigned astonishment. "My girl here too!" added she, looking at her daughter; "then it was no dream."

"No, mother, it was no dream," said Anasuya, as she cast one fearful side-glance at the huge dead animal that lay a few paces off, still terrific from its size. "Be-

hold there! How fearful the elephant is in death. I shudder to look at it even now."

"And you, young cavalier," continued the mother, not regarding her daughter's interruption, "you have saved us from death by your valour and dexterity. Say, noble stranger, how can we requite you?"

"Lady, I am sufficiently rewarded by the deed I have done. The pleasure of having saved you and your daughter is recompense enough."

"It is not enough, young man," replied the matron. "The world will brand us with ingratitude if we part with you thus. You must be our guest; and, ere we part, I will reward your courage with something more substantial than the mere consciousness you feel of having done well. Believe me, it is in my power."

"I do believe it," replied the young man, and cast one passionate and furtive glance at the maiden who stood by. Anasuya observed it, and met it with natural shyness, and, while her breast heaved violently beneath the folds of her garment, she murmured unintelligible professions of obligation and gratitude.

The queen and her daughter now prepared to return home, and asked the stranger to accompany them, which he did with much good-will. But the more they neared the palace the more he began to wonder where they meant to go. At last, when they had left all the other roads, and betook to that which conducted to the king's residence, he could suppress his curiosity no longer, and asked them where their home was.

"Why friend," said the queen, "there is no other building here but the one before us, and that is our home."

"And that, though I am a stranger in the land, I can well understand is the palace of your king."

"Yes, of my king," said the lady, "and," she added with a smile, "of my husband also."

Did not the stranger kneel to render her due obedience? No. He bent his keen, dark eyes on the

maiden, her daughter, with an expression of such earnest and deep devotion as could not be misread, and then addressing the mother, said, "Madam, you will excuse me that I cannot be your guest to-night. I had forgotten that I have a prior engagement, which demands my presence elsewhere. Some other time I shall wait on you at your husband's palace. But for the present I will here take my leave."

This was unexpected. The queen asked him to defer the other engagement for a time; but he said that he could not do so. She expostulated and argued with him; but he was deaf to her prayers. Large rewards and a noble reception were promised him if he would come with them; but such promises he answered with a smile. He was in easy circumstances in life, he said, and craved for no worldly advantages which it was in the power of princes to confer; and, as to a noble reception, he expected that the gratitude of the king would not cool for a little delay. Even Anasuya, casting off her shyness, had the boldness to press her mother's entreaties. But the young man was inexorable. "The smile of the fair," said he, "is the best reward to the youthful and the bold, and I care for none other."

Such self-denial in one who, from his humble attire, seemed to be not far above men of ordinary rank and position, rather surprised the queen, and perhaps nettled her a little.

"Well," said she, "if you will not oblige us by coming to our house to-night, you will not surely refuse to tell us who, whence, and what you are."

The stranger hesitated. It were rude to deny this. "I am a merchant's son," he said, "and have travelled from countries far in the West, to trade in your imperial capital. My home is in Irán."

"And your name?"

He hesitated again, then slowly added, "Bensháh-poor."

And then they parted. That night, though buried in

profound slumber, Anasuya dreamt the most fantastic dreams; of fearful sounds blent with the finest music, of Bunnoo and her handsome lover, of elephants, merchants, marriages, and brave Benscháhpours.

Next morning the whole city of Kanouj rung with the fame of the stranger, who, by his wonderful dexterity and presence of mind, had rescued the queen and the princess from an untimely and fearful end. The name of Benscháhpour was not uttered anywhere without a gracious adjective being prefixed to it; and when Báśdeo, the king, held his court, surrounded by rájáhs and chieftains, he publicly promulgated his royal thanks to the brave defender of his family. Not satisfied with paying him this tribute of applause, he ordered his servants to seek for Benscháhpour all his kingdom over, and bring him to his presence, that he might have the satisfaction of beholding him and heaping on him well merited-honours.

It was long, however, before Benscháhpour could be found. Days and weeks passed over without furnishing any trace of him; and, when he was finally discovered, it was on the information of an old woman, a neighbour of one Hunifáh, a butcher, who, thinking that the court merely wanted to punish Benscháhpour for some misdemeanor unknown, brought intelligence to the royal retainers that such a person, as he was described to be, visited, she knew not wherefore, the house of the butcher every night at a late hour, and again left it before dawn.

"If there be any secret in it," she said, "Bunnoo might reveal it if she would."

"And who is Bunnoo, mother?" asked the chief of the guards.

"Why, God bless your honour's soul! this Bunnoo is an awkward, ill-mannered, unmarried girl, and not of the best fame."

"Then there is no mightier secret at bottom, I think, than that our good Benscháhpour is a sly dog, and knows the trick of pleasing an unmarried girl. Ha! ha!"

The old lady grinned also. It was just the scandal she

wanted to propagate; and, sure that she had fired the match aright, she went back her way, perhaps already anticipating that Bunnoo would soon be made the hooting-stock of the town, and her lover be either hanged or thrashed out of the country. But all our anticipations are rarely realized, and those of the good old lady were destined to prove vain.

Bensháhpoor, however, was taken, and, much against his own inclination, forcibly ushered into a crowded court. The king was all smiles and kindness, but this prepossession began gradually to give way with his appearance, for he stood erect in the presence, though he was often told to kneel; and his bearing was so proud and haughty that Básdeo bit his lips in anger, and his *omráhs* looked at the stranger with unkindly eyes. The king, however, remembering how deeply he was indebted to him, controlled his passion and put up with his pride.

"Bensháhpoor," said he, "for the great deed you have done, you are entitled to receive some favour at our hands. I therefore ordered you to be brought to our presence. Speak, what favour would you have?"

"I ask no favour but one," answered Bensháhpoor, "namely, to be permitted to enjoy the same liberty in your empire as is allowed to other strangers."

"That is no favour at all. Is there nothing else that I can do for you? Ask, and I will grant it."

"Will you?" said Bensháhpoor. "Well, king, I will take you at your word. Give me the maiden I saved to wife."

The *omráhs* were horror-struck at the audacity of the Káffir, and all eyes were turned on the king to see how it affected him. But Básdeo only burst out into laughter, exclaiming, "Oh, the madman!"

"I knew," answered Bensháhpoor, "that you would not keep your word. Kings promise largely, but their promises are seldom of much value. Now let me go;" and he prepared to leave the presence.

"One word more, Bensháhpoor," said Básdeo, "and I will have done with thee. If, forgetting the ordinances

of our holy religion, and waiving aside the advice of our sages and priests, I bestowed on thee my daughter, say how wouldst thou support her? Thou art a merchant's son, I have heard; she the daughter of a king. The plant of a rich soil removed to a less generous field would soon cease to flourish."

"Had you kept your word, king," replied the haughty stranger, with a smile of derision on his face, "your daughter would have found in my *hárem* no change but for the better."

The whole court laughed outright on hearing this; and some asked aloud if butcher Hunifáh's shop was his great *hárem*, while others shouted, "Lead him to the mad-house." But Básdeo, still remembering his debt, granted him the only reasonable favour he had asked, the same liberty which all strangers enjoyed; and Bensháhpoor was permitted to retire from the royal presence.

Time jogged on. Bensháhpoor was forgotten in spite of his gallant feat, and his audacity, while the lovely Anasuya waxed lovelier every hour. It was at the close of a hot, sultry day that the rájáh of Kanouj was cooling himself by the side of a beautiful artificial fountain that watered his garden. His couch was the hide of the royal white elephant Bensháhpoor had slain, and his pillow the lap of a fair slave, who fanned him. Two other slaves as fair shampooed his feet. His *omráhs* and *pundits* stood around, and, ever and anon, he addressed them with his usual listlessness, more to hear what they had to say, than to say anything himself. Before him were a band of pretty nautch-girls, wearying themselves with futile efforts to please him, for not a smile did he deign on all their exertions.

"Sewrutun," said the king, addressing one of his oldest courtiers, "I am dull, very dull, to-day. Have you no news to give zest to his spirits when your sovereign is dying of ennui?"

"If it please your majesty," answered Sewrutun, "I have fresh news to tell; news that should cure you of

your dulness: such news as seldom falls to our lot to bring."

"Out with it then; why dost thou delay to deliver it?"

"I would convey it to your highness's ear alone. It is too good to be made public yet."

Básdeo rose from his recumbent posture, and, with an air of impatience, waived his hand to the crowd of courtiers who surrounded him. The dance of the nautch-girls was also arrested; and they were all told to retire, all but his female slaves, and the favourite Sewrutun.

"Now tell us, Sewrutun, your spirit-stirring news. We are alone. Out with it like an honest man."

And then Sewrutun told his news; and it was good, for it cleared the moody front of the king, and made him glád. It made him thoughtful also, and anxious; and henceforward many a time and oft were Básdeo and Sewrutun to be seen closeted together, discussing in secret some mighty and momentous subject withheld from the knowledge of the court. The other nobles on this began to be curious; but all their efforts to pry into the character of these secret conferences were fruitless. Eavesdroppers—for even kings have such creatures about them—brought them disjointed conversations from which they could make out nothing, till one day the following dialogue was reported to them.

"Ah! it is a shrewd guess—a shrewd one," said the king. "But that he should have left his throne, and cast his diadem aside for such a purpose, is yet hard to believe."

"But it is sooth, my liege," said Sewrutun. "I will bet you my life that it is true. I believe in the story, for I saw him when a boy, when I went to his father's court, despatched thither by your majesty's predecessor, and laden with the tribute of Hindustán. Even then, though but a stripling scarce past his thirteenth year, he had won a name for deeds of manhood. Now, they say, in all the West he has no peer either in wisdom or valour."

"Ay, but where is the wisdom in the step he is reported to have taken?" urged Bāsdeo; "show me that."

"Why, my lord, if he wishes to inform himself of the power, policy, manners, and government of his neighbours, how could he do that better than by the means he has adopted?" replied Sewrutun.

The king was evidently satisfied with the argument. "You are right," said he, "you are right. And you say none of the other princes of India know aught about the matter yet?"

"None, my liege."

"Look sharp for him then, Sewrutun. I anticipate great advantages in being the first to honour him; and I will count you the chief of my nobles if you can trace him out."

Even this scrap of information was not sufficiently explicit. It gave the other *omráhs* some insight into the nature of the secret conferences; but yet much, too much, remained unknown. They were, however, not destined to remain in ignorance long.

One afternoon, while the king and his favourite were chatting together in their usual manner, the city Kotewál, or chief officer of the police, was announced.

"What brings that varlet hither to interrupt my business?" muttered Bāsdeo to himself; and as the officer came in and knelt to him, he sharply turned round upon him, and told him to have done with his foolery and speak out his errand.

"Scouring the suburbs this morning, my liege, I have captured a Káffir vagrant, who has profaned the temple of Mahádeo by sleeping within it last night, and defiled the fountain dedicated to Lakshmi by performing his ablutions in its crystal waters."

"What! defiled the temple of Mahádeo, and polluted the fountain of Lakshmi, and dost thou come to tell me that the Káffir is yet alive? Drag hither the impious wretch that I may see him rent in pieces in my presence, and thee with him."

The unhappy culprit was dragged in accordingly ; but what was the surprise of the king when he found that he was no other than the madman Bensháhpoor, who had aspired to the hand of his daughter. The fierce eyes of Básdeo, which were glowing like those of a tiger, were at once subdued into compassion.

"That madman again! ah, hurt him not," he said. "Poor soul! his wits are crazed. Go, tell our priests to purify the temple and the fountain, by chanting the sacred hymns of the *Veds*, and bid our guards take better care that the idiot does not approach them again. And thou, Bensháhpoor, as thou valuest thy life, answer sooth, and tell me wherefore thou didst enter God's temple to sleep in it, and made use of the sacred waters dedicated to Lakshmi for thy ablutions?"

"King, I will answer you truly, as you bid me," said Bensháhpoor; "not for my life's sake, for my life is in the hands of God, and thou canst not take it unless He wills it so, but for the sake of that truth to which I have devoted my life. I repaired to the temple for slumber, because in your wide empire I have no home, and I saw that it was tenantless; and I bathed my limbs in the waters of the fountain, because I knew not that in these heathen lands waters are dedicated to God, while hearts are left to sin on."

"You speak like a philosopher, while you prove yourself but a fool," said Básdeo. "But how is it, vagrant, that you had no house to sleep in last night of all, after you had managed to kennel somewhere every other night?"

"I slept in the house of a butcher, who permitted me to use some of his rooms before. But thither I would not go last night, and that is the only reason."

"But why wouldst thou not go there last night? There is surely some reason for that."

"My liege, spare the blushes of the boy," here interrupted an officious officer of the guards. "The butcher has a girl whom he has been making love to, and this

perhaps has been found out, which has resulted in his being denied admittance."

"Nay, king, heed not the viper that maligns my daughter's fame," exclaimed Hunifáh, who was forcing his way forward through the crowd, which had by this time collected in the presence-chamber. "This good youth is one of the noblest lads I have ever known. He hired my rooms, and while he used them paid for their use as punctually as your highness showers blessings upon your faithful subjects. But envious neighbours envied my good fortune, and, to defraud me of my custom, they propagated a dishonest tale, sullyng my daughter's reputation. I heeded not the idle story; but this good youth, having heard of it, would house with us no more, lest his doing so should confirm the worthless scandal. 'A maiden's fame is like a mirror,' he said; 'it must not even be breathed upon.'"

"All this was very noble of him," observed the king. "This is not an ordinary fool, I see; and, but for the sacrilege thou hast done, Benscháhpoor, thou wouldst have risen vastly in our estimation to-day. But we have pardoned thee thy crime. Go, leave the presence; be gone!"

"No, no, my liege, let him not leave the presence," said Sewrutun. "I have seen that face before; and, though these rheumy eyes take time to read one's features right, they have never yet deceived me. That is Bahrám Gor, the king of Persia."

The truth now flashed upon the mind of Básdeo. Bahrám Gor was the son of Sháhpoor III., and *Benscháhpoor* was therefore not a false name. He descended from his throne, and, embracing the royal stranger, seated him upon it; then, taking off the crown from his own head, he laid it at his feet. Bahrám Gor was now compelled to assume his proper character, and he was treated with the utmost magnificence. History does not tell us what additional consequence Básdeo gained by being the foremost to honour him; but it does mention that, before Bahrám Gor left the Indian court, the lovely Anasuya had

blushed her last virgin blushes in the arms of a Sásanian husband.

GURH BEETLI: A TALE OF AJMERE.

THE bigotry of its Mahomedan conquerors has almost entirely destroyed all the relics of Hindu antiquity in Ajmere, and with the spoils of heathen architecture, erected their own *eedgás*, mosques, and mausoleums. Few are the edifices which have been spared, and they are chiefly of such make and character as could be easily converted to other use. Over the rest oblivion and desolation have been allowed to cast their portentous shadows; and a few little fragments of stone and brick, to which time and weather have given one uniform tint of darkness, are often all that survive of grandeur and glory which have, perhaps, never been surpassed. Ancient ruins are quite common in Ajmere; and one, to all appearances the oldest amongst them, is reported to be the wreck of Gurh Beetli, the fortress-tower of Mánick Rái.

The palace and towers of Mánick Rái have long been in ruins, the hands of the profane having reduced what even all-ravaging time had spared. With antiquarians even the very site where they stood has come to be doubted, so utterly have even their vestiges been defaced. But tradition still points to the spot with unerring hand, and there are associations connected with it which prevent its being forgotten by general observers.

In the days of Kaliph Wálid, the conquest and conversion of Hindustán were entrusted to a zealous and god-fearing follower of the Faithful, named Rooshun Áli, who, landing at Augar, marched through the very heart of India, and besieged the citádel of Ajmere. Mánick Rái was then its king; and the heir to his throne was Lot, a young and valiant prince, worthy of his illustrious father.

The period is one of such total darkness in the history of India, that it is impossible to discover the reasons which led Rooshun Áli to invest Gurh Beethi, in preference to the other great fortresses of the day. Popular tradition asserts that woman was at the bottom of the affair; and, as the hypothesis is a shrewd one, we make no apology for recording the tale.

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"It is a sweet, pretty place we have landed at," said Khodábux, addressing his general, and making his humblest *salaam*; "but we don't see enemies to fight with, my lord, unless we are going to pitch at the cormorants there, that are battling with each other over yon dying antelope."

Rooshun Áli made no reply to his follower's remarks, but cast his eyes in the direction that was pointed out, and saw an old antelope, evidently worn out with age, lying within a hundred yards off in a dying state, the cormorants fearlessly lacerating his living flesh.

"To the eye of faith," said the general musingly to himself, "that old antelope is a type of the vicious old country on which we have landed, and the cormorants are the zealous children of truth feeding on her vitals." Then raising his eyes towards heaven, and stretching out his hands supplicatingly, he cried, "God of Mahomet, I accept the omen; give me the triumph it prognosticates, and I will people thy hell with the souls of unbelieving Káffirs, if I cannot convert them for thy heaven."

The pious zeal of the general found a ready echo in the hearts of his attached followers, and a council of war was immediately convened to determine the direction of their course. The opinions and suggestions expressed on the occasion were of various kinds. One chief was for repairing to the walls of Delhi and gaining possession of that important citadel; another suggested the capture of Kanouj, in the first instance, as the place of most importance; a third was for desultory excursions in every direction; and so on. At this juncture, a *fakir* from Mediná

arose to address the meeting. He was one of those saintly men who kept constant vigil over the sepulchre of the blessed Prophet, and the chiefs prepared to listen to him with that becoming deference which his holy character entitled him to receive. His appearance was humble and his habits poor and tattered; but a sword still graced his thigh to mow down the enemies of the Faithful, and it was a sword of extraordinarily large dimensions for a *fakir* to be armed with. His eyes also emitted a sharp light, showing that, with the harmlessness of the dove, he united in his character the cunning shrewdness of the serpent.

His address to the council was short but comprehensive. In the cause of the Lord and his Prophet, he had before visited the land of the heathens. He had visited all its principal cities, and even howling wildernesses which the foot of man had seldom penetrated; and he could speak from experience that the Chohán empire at Ajmere was the most powerful of the independent principalities of India. He had also seen Mánick Rái, its king, and spoken to him, and he believed him to be most inimicable to the propagation of the true faith, while his heir Lot was the proudest and most arrogant of infidels. To chastise them therefore should, he said, be the first object of their mission; and he assured them that, at that very moment, the Prophet himself was watching over their deliberations from the upper horn of the moon.

The words of the *fakir* were like red wine to the spirits of the chiefs. "Another hour has struck in the destinies of empires!" shouted Rooshun Áli, starting from his seat. "Mount, cavaliers; set on. I feel the conqueror in my heart already. Forward for the Korán, or to death!" Nor were the shouts of the chief unresponded to. Panting for glory, the soldiers armed themselves in haste. Home and country they had left behind to fight for the goodly cause of Mahomet, and danger and they were long known to each other: and their goodly steeds of Bussoráh soon

panted under the burden of stalwart veterans, heavy from the rich panoply they wore, perhaps heavier from the strong and determined resolution that swelled in each bosom.

"Let the friar have the crescent, and he shall guide us forward," said Rooshun Áli; and the friar, with the standard in his hand, led the way; and within a few moments, to the sailors on the beach, the trumpet's yell and the voice of the drum became fainter and fainter till they died away.

It cannot be necessary for us to follow the army through all the difficulties and perils of the desert route. Leading through fields of sand and mountain defiles, so skilfully did the *fakir* unravel all the mazes of an Indian road, that Rooshun Áli could not help believing the saint as one peculiarly favoured of heaven, perhaps the Prophet himself in disguise. Here and there small parties of heathen robbers, or skulking savages, were now and then encountered unawares; but the odds were fearful against them, and, too eager to escape, they offered no opposition; and the army marched on un-reduced in number, and full of confidence. Where villages were passed by the villagers were, in utter wantonness, shot at or cut down; but these scenes of slaughter and atrocity were by no means common, for the path was wild, and not much studded with villages—so wild, in fact, that, but for the able lead of their sacred guide, it would have been impossible for the host, as every leader frankly admitted, to extricate itself from its dreary and desolate windings. But the darkest day has an end, and so has the longest path; and after a difficult and adventurous career, the army issued forth upon the beautiful and romantic valley of Ajmere, dotted with innumerable villages, and teeming with life and activity. And now, in earnest, began the errand of blood and rapine. The unfortunate heathens were everywhere provoked and hunted to death; men, women, and children were pursued down like wolves; and, in true Arabian style, with bloody hands and dripping

blades, the Moslems approached the capital of Mánick Rái.

The citadel of Ajmere stood on the summit of a hill, a noble pile of barbaric magnificence. There is a tradition that the king who built it was skilled in the occult sciences, and that the whole work was erected in less than three complete days. However that be, certain it is, that it was one of the most magnificent specimens of oriental architecture ever seen, for, even at the present day, the stranger who wanders amongst its ruins, often gazes with astonishment on the little remnants of art which yet survive the ravages of time. At the foot of the hill was spread the city, with its delightful gardens and silver fountains, and enclosing a wide circumference; and before it now stood the Moslem army, bent on the fulfilment of their bloody mission, and impatient for the fray.

When the proud procession of Mahomedan chivalry approached Gurh Beetli, the Hindu warriors looked out of their castle with an indifference and contempt which their condition hardly justified. Their numbers were so few compared to those of the enemy, that this might have been imputed to dogged fool-hardiness, had it not been well-known, that in that age, in high soldierly spirit and daring, the Rájputs were second to no nation on the earth. Mánick Rái affected surprise that even in such numbers, Káffirs should dare to hunt him in his hole. "Is the Chohán name so little in their eyes," said he to his men, "that they dare come so far on such an errand?" and he insisted on giving them instant battle, with all his disadvantages against him. His walls and towers were of vast strength and in perfect repair, and his magazines were well-stored with all the munitions of war; and yet he would not entertain, even for a moment, the idea of standing a siege. Prudence and judgment the Rájputs despised as womanly virtues; valour was the only accomplishment for men, and even against overwhelming numbers he was determined to take his stand.

But if the old king was valiant, his heir was like him too—ay, every inch a prince; and the prodigies of valour performed by him were numerous to relate. Even veteran warriors delighted to speak of his deeds, and not many were the youths in the land who cared to meet him alone in arms.

“Let me challenge the bravest of their chiefs, my father,” said he to the king, “ere we meet in general fight. We have been ever famed for exchanging chivalrous courtesies with our enemies; and in tilts and single combats is much glory to be won.” And by dint of entreaty he obtained permission to have his wish.

The announcement was accordingly made to the invaders, and Lot lost no time to present himself before them. For the strong heart and stout arm the brave everywhere have great regard; and the sinewy frame and apparent nerve of the prince drew forth loud praises even from his enemies. Many were the Mahomedan chiefs anxious to wrestle a fall with him; and they rose up clamorously to claim the dangerous and honourable distinction. But great was the astonishment of all when they found the holy friar from Medina step forward foremost before them, and, drawing himself up to his full height, assert his prior claim.

“Warriors,” said he, addressing his valiant competitors, “you have all won distinction by your valour ere now; and for those who have not done so, the hour will shortly arrive. To me this is the only opportunity for winning renown, and I have old scores to settle with the prince of Ajmere.”

He did not wait to observe what impression his address made on his hearers, who stood still and motionless with amazement. With eyes glaring fiercely on his opponent, he advanced to meet him with the rapid strides of a warrior, and approaching him, whispered something in his ear that made him start back in surprise. Lot looked keenly at the *fakir's* face, examining his features attentively, and without speaking a word. He even seemed

anxious to avoid the personal encounter he had himself provoked, and taking his opponent kindly by the hand, said to him almost beseechingly, "Let bygones be bygones, Mullináth. Be the past forgotten, since we are met again."

"No, it shall never be forgotten," said the friar, "till one of us is dead. My name is Mullináth no longer, but Áli Máhmood."

"But yours was a noble heart. You should forget and forgive."

"I am not what I was, and, villain, thou hast made me what I am."

"I have done you wrong—I have injured you much, my brother, and I would fain avoid the guilt of taking your life. Forget and forgive the past, come to my bosom as my childhood's friend, and I will heal the wounds I have inflicted. My father's empire will I divide with you; and we will reign like brethren, and like brethren die."

A bitter smile curled up the lips of the friar. "You acted a brother's part, no doubt," said he, "when you wrenched my beloved Máyá from my arms. Why do you waste words with me? Come, leave this trifling, and bare your sword."

"But she is dead, Mullináth. Are you not avenged? Heaven has punished me already for the violence, and snatched her away."

"Dead! didst thou say?" exclaimed the *fakir*, staggering back for a moment, as if shot or pierced through the heart, while his eyes stared with a vague expression of sorrow. But he rallied quickly, and demanded when she died.

"Within a month after I was married to her," replied Lot, the tears rushing to his eyes. But tears came not to the eyes of the raving friar. They glared like those of a tiger on his foe.

"Turn hell-hound, turn," he said. "The broken heart calls on me to revenge her wrongs;" and flashing his sabre from the scabbard, he struck his antagonist on

the face with the flat of the weapon, and drew back his arm to repeat the blow.

The pain and insult roused all the soldier in the Rájput prince. He also bared his sword, and the weapons clashed together. There was no more forbearance on the part of either. Lot's brotherly affection had now changed to fury. Both the combatants were strong men; both, from their skill in arms, were formidable in single-handed conflicts; the struggle, therefore, was long continued. The friar, however, seemed to be endowed with superhuman strength for the occasion. The strong and vigorous prince was almost paralyzed, and unable to repel the furious onsets directed against him; and now his adversary's steel flashed high above his head, and now it descended and was buried in his heart. His huge frame quivered strongly, there was a film over his sight, his head drooped forward, and he fell down a corpse.

A cry now arose from the ramparts of Gurh Bectli; the shriek of a bereaved father for his only son. It was the signal for immediate war.

"Why wait ye further my men," shouted Mánick Rái; "behold there the blood of your prince calling out for vengeance. Follow me, my best and bravest, and avenge his fall;" and, blind to danger, with a handful of men, he hurried down to the plains below. The friar was still by the side of his fallen adversary. He appeared to have forgotten the grudge he had borne to the dead, for he had closed his dying eyes, and was now kneeling and praying beside him for his soul, when the Rájputs, exciting themselves by their own yells, rushed down to the field. Then had the friar been lost for ever, if Rooshun Áli in person, with the whole of his host at his back, had not hurried to his aid. The charge was sounded with the general and the *fakir* at the head of the troops; and where the opposing armies met the struggle was terrible. But the disproportion in numbers was too great for this fury to last long. The Rájputs fought everywhere with their characteristic valour. Every man was equal to a score,

and seemed to multiply himself to face the surrounding perils: but, in vain. Those who were foremost in danger were also the foremost to die; and it was evident that neither courage nor fortitude could much longer avert the issue of the field. In one quarter only the Rájpoor troops were invincible. It was where Mánick Rái, with a select band of his men, was striking terror in his enemies, by his desperate valour. There rested all the hopes of the Rájpoors—on that point was bent every yearning eye. At this moment the friar singled out the king, and snatching up a crescent, rushed to the post of danger crying aloud, "Ye warriors of Islám! behold, your crescent is in danger. Rescue it if you can."

"Forward, forward!" shouted Rooshun Áli; "Lo! our ensign is in the midst of the enemy."

All eyes were turned to the spot, and then there was a rush for fame. Heroes illustrious and unknown, dashed with equal ardour upon the hitherto compact party of the heathens. Mánick Rái did all that a soldier could do. But he was wounded in several places by several assailants, and from loss of blood, which flowed profusely from his wounds, he sank to the ground, and was crushed to death beneath the feet of friends and enemies. His fall at once decided the fortunes of the day. The Rájpoors fled not, but the national palladium of safety was gone. There was nobody now around whom to rally; and heart-broken and sad they made an ineffectual resistance. Over the atrocity that was perpetrated that night in the capital of Ajmere we draw a veil.

The reduction of the fortress followed the capture of the city; and as soon as the work of destruction was completed, and its formidable bastions and turrets reduced to ruins, the drums beat for departure, and the Mahomedan army moved off to other quarters for glory and distinction. One man only of that vast legion went not back from the bloody sod. The drums beat to fall in and march, but he heeded them not. Where the houses were broken and ransacked, where the utter

wantonness of destruction stared at him in everything around, he stood alone. It was the *fakir* that had accompanied the Moslem host; and he dwelt long among the ruins he had made. His principal occupation was to extol the fame of the late prince Lot in ballads and songs; and so much did his exertions succeed, that up to this day the name is mentioned among the lares and penates of the Chohán race. Who the man was, was never discovered; but when he died, a curl of dark, raven hair was found next to his heart, the relic perhaps of some disappointed or frustrated affection.

THE CONQUEROR OF ALORE.

MAHOMED KÁSİM, the nephew of Hájáz, governor of Bussoráh, was only twenty years of age, when, at the head of six thousand Arabs, he entered India, and filled the heathens with alarm. The astonished Hindus saw him march in open defiance through their territories, reducing fortress after fortress with impunity. The strongholds of Dewal and Bráhmaábád, of Nerun, She-wan, and Sálím had successively yielded to his valour; and he now sat before the gates of Alore, and called upon the garrison to surrender.

Alore was the capital of Dáhir Despati, a Rájput prince, whose extensive empire extended from the mouths of the Indus to the mountains of Kálábágh, including the districts of Scinde and Mooltán, and a fair part of the fertile plains of the Punjáb. He was beloved in peace and valiant in war; and such was his name for personal courage, that, though his locks were bleached with years and service, there was no aspirant for military renown in all India who was ambitious of meeting him in arms. But the daring Arab had approached Alore undaunted by the bugbear of a name; and, as if the more perilous the

enterprise the greater his pleasure to encounter it, he had twice offered to meet the Rájput in single combat, and commit his fortunes to the issue.

Dáhir Despati, hitherto habituated to act only on the offensive, saw the investment of his capital with rage and astonishment, and vowed a vow to avenge the insult with the blood of the invader. He had two thousand men of brawny limbs and unyielding spirit within the walls, and, said he to himself, "If I can but make a push to the field with my hardy veterans, ten thousand more will flock to my standard from the country around." "Push on, then! throw open the sallyport and rush to the field," said headlong Valour to her grey-headed favourite; but calmer Discretion shook her head in disapprobation of such counsel, and reminded him that he had two young and lovely daughters in his palace, who would not make proper soldiers for the sally, and might not be deserted with safety. "I will accept the Arab's offer, and meet him hand to hand," at last resolved the prince; "my strong limbs have never failed me." His faithful retainers endeavoured to dissuade him from such rashness, and advised him to hold out till succours should arrive; but in vain. He had one answer for them all. "To sit here cooped up is no honour to a soldier. One to one is a fair encounter, and he that declines it is a coward."

With the first light of morning a solitary horseman was seen to issue from the beleaguered city. His bearing was haughty, and he was armed to the teeth; and, as he rode towards the Arab host, he flourished a spear in his hand. Kásim viewed from afar the daring soldier, and knew him at a glance. "Now reach me my headpiece," said he to his squire, while in haste he snatched his buckler from the wall; then vaulting on his powerful charger, he dashed the rowels in his side. Half-way between the besieged and the besiegers they met with a terrible shock. At the very first encounter they were both unhorsed, and, closing with mortal hate, both came down to the earth, violently struggling with each other. Hindu and Moslem

looked upon the contest with equal anxiety, and both with stormy looks and lowering eyes. For a while the combatants fought with equal advantage, tumbling side by side, and tugging hard with unrelaxing sinews. At last the Arab found an opportunity to make a powerful thrust at his opponent, and simultaneously a shout of triumph rose from the Moslem camp, and a cry of horror from Alore.

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"This is no longer a fit place for us to dwell in," said the weeping Bhaváni to her younger sister, who clung to her arm and bedewed it with tears. "The city will be immediately given up to the murderer, and when he enters the palace he will enter it to insult our fallen fortunes. Let us fly in time."

"But whither?" asked the timid Umá, "where can the fatherless fly to for refuge?"

"I know not," was the reply; "but be it to the woods or to the rocks, fly we must. It is better to be devoured by the beasts of the forest, than fall victims to the Káffir's lawless rage."

"But are we not invested? Are not all chances of retreat cut off? No, my dearest sister, I have no strength to move. Here will I await my doom, and bless the hand that gives me death."

"Ah! my innocent darling, death would indeed be a blessing to thee and me. But evils far worse than death now threaten us. The Káffirs are savage beasts, not men; and we must avoid their fury. In flight is our only hope of safety; and the confusion which the departure of our garrison and the entry of the conquerors into the city must create, may cover our retreat."

The flush of departing day still lingered above the tree-tops in the western sky, when an old man, accompanied by two females, dressed so that it was apparent that they were bent on some long and fatiguing journey, issued from an obscure part of the city, and, by a narrow and blind path, wended unobserved towards the great *shikh-*

árgáhs, or forests, which, reduced to a thicket, fringed the military road of Alore. They spoke to each other in a low voice, and only when it was absolutely necessary to consult together; and at every step they cast furtive glances about them, as if momentarily expecting a surprise. But there was nothing to interrupt their journey; and they penetrated deeper and deeper into the thicket, till darkness compelled them to think of halting. It was a quiet, secluded spot, and at a little distance from them they descried a cavern, from which issued the faint glimmerings of a feeble light.

"Some pious hermit, I believe, has here taken up his quarters," said Bhaváni to Umá, when she saw her looking towards the light with fear.

"So much the better, lady," observed the servant; "he will give us shelter, and may help our flight."

But the light grew feebler as they drew nearer to it, and, when they stood before the cavern, it was gone. This was startling, but Bhaváni, still dreading a pursuit from the enemy, encouraged her party to enter the cave.

"'Tis better," said she, "to be torn to pieces by wild beasts, than fall into the hands of the Káfirs;" and with as much courage as they could muster they prepared to follow her.

Their entrance was opposed by a strong wind, which seemed to rush out from the inmost recesses of the den, as if to dissuade them from their purpose; and to the fanciful ear of Umá it bore the echo of a moan. But her more courageous sister undauntedly led the way, alive only to one danger which she was bent on avoiding. When they gained the inside of the cave they lighted a little fire, and discovered that there was nothing suspicious in their retreat except its utter dreariness. It might have served equally perhaps as the home of a retired hermit, the hold of a skulking robber, or the lair of a ruthless lioness; but it was evident that to all such use it had been a stranger, at least for some time. They therefore laid themselves down and slept there in perfect

security till they were awakened by a strange, tremendous noise, which was succeeded by others still louder and more strange. The fire they had kindled had died into cinders, whose feeble gleams revealed a sight that curdled their blood. A foul, old hag stood before them, and, waving a burning wand in her skinny hand, sternly demanded how they had dared to defile her retreat with their presence. Umá covered her eyes with her lily hands, and the old servant muttered prayers and incantations to scare away the apparition. But Bhaváni had more courage for the occasion. She had heard of good as well as evil spirits—of those that delighted to relieve as well as of those that delighted to injure.

“Mother,” said she, with all the voice she could muster, “mother, thou knowest that we have sought refuge in thy cave to flee from the Káásirs.”

“I know it,” replied the sorceress, relenting in her voice and manner; “but art thou the daughter of Dáhir, and seekest thou safety in flight in preference to vengeance?”

“Vengeance! tell me, mother, how I, a woman, can avenge our wrongs?” demanded the Rájputni, with soul on fire; “set me but in the way, and life and fortune will I sacrifice to revenge my father’s death.”

“Hence then, and throw thyself in the power of his enemy.”

“But—,” interposed Bhaváni, “but—”

“I will tell no more,” was the peevish answer.

And lo! the apparition was gone.

They hurried in haste out of that dreary cavern. The sun was just peeping above the horizon, and his ruddy light, which tinged the top of the thicket, served greatly to restore the spirit of the frightened party. Umá recovered courage enough to look about her, the servant to cease muttering his prayers, and Bhaváni to wipe the clammy moisture that hung upon her brow.

“Now whither do we go?” asked the timid Umá of

her more daring sister. "I like not the route we are on."

"Back! back must we go," exclaimed Bhaváni, thus recalled to her resolution. "Didst thou not hear the phantom speak? Back, once more to the halls of Alore!"

Umá shuddered, and drew closer to her sister as the apparition was alluded to, while the servant for the first time authoritatively set himself against the wishes of his mistress. "Devils and sorceresses," said he, "must never be obeyed by those who wish to avoid evil, for nothing but disaster comes out of their counsel;" and he threatened to desert them rather than accompany them back to Alore. Bhaváni had now no alternative to choose. The by-path they had trod over was too intricate to be retraced without a guide. "Forward, then," said she; "if throwing myself into the Kaffir's hands will insure me vengeance, the opportunity will not long be wanting." And forward they went. It was a sore trial for tender maidens, but they pressed on with unremitting exertion. The sun was high up in the heavens when the guide suddenly stopped.

"Wherefore this halt, friend?" demanded Bhaváni; "art weary so soon?"

"We have missed our path," was the fearful reply.

"And come in front of danger?" asked the timid Umá.

"Ay, lady! curse on these grey hairs for that," returned the servant. "But that hag must have put her hand in this. I never missed my way before."

"But where's the danger you threaten us with?" asked Bhaváni. "I see neither fierce beasts nor devils about us."

"Hear'st thou, lady, the hum of men? A single turn in the road brings us at once to the great military route, and I fear in full view of the Moslem host."

"A happy mistake it is, then, old man! It may yet help me to revenge;" and saying this, Bhaváni drew her sister closer to her side, and increased her pace.

A turn of the by-path now brought them out of the thicket to the military road of Alore, thronged with stragglers from the Moslem army; and they were no sooner seen than a small party of horsemen darted at them, clearing their way through the crowd.

"The Prophet be praised that we have found our quarry at last!" exclaimed one to another, as they surrounded the sisters.

"And right glad will be our youthful general at our success."

"Ay, will he not have cause? There never was seen such beauty before; certainly not in Arabia, and I doubt if even in paradise."

For a moment all eyes were turned on the sisters in earnest gaze, but they were averted again in haste, which best betrayed the fears of the soldiers at their own temerity. Spare horses were now procured for the captives, and on their being seated on them, the order to move forward was given.

When Kásim entered Alore his first inquiries were after the daughters of Despati, and great was his surprise when he heard that, in the general hurried and forced departure of the garrison, they too had left the city. A diligent search was instantly made, but none knew the route they had taken, and it was impossible to obtain any clue to it. All hopes in fact were just being given up when fortune threw them once more in his power in the way we have stated; and the pleasure of the party that had accidentally made the capture was great, as they were sure of handsome rewards for their success.

Within an hour after the sisters saw themselves back again in the palace whence they had departed the evening before; but what a change had taken place there within that short period! It was now guarded inside and out, like a military encampment; soldiers were running up and down chambers and antechambers; all the apartments, in fact, except one wing of the building, reserved exclusively for them, had been converted into barracks

for the Arab officers, even the imperial saloon, where their beloved father used to sit in patriarchal dignity, to dispense justice to his loving subjects, having been appropriated by the Káffir general. These were sights to break open again the wounds of distress; but though Umá wept, her more heroic sister proudly suppressed her feelings.

Mahomed Kásim was but in his twentieth year. His captives were reputed to be as handsome as they were high-born, and he long considered in his mind whether he should suffer such dangerous temptations to be brought before his eyes. Curiosity, however, prevailed, and the ladies were ordered to be conducted to his presence. Notwithstanding the fearful array of Káffirs around her, Bhaváni trod the floor with a towering haughtiness that peculiarly became her. But Umá, the gentle-hearted, followed the footsteps of her sister with a pale and dejected countenance, and trembling like an aspen. The whole circle opened to receive them; and even Kásim arose to greet his prisoners. Bhaváni answered his condescension with a scornful eye; but Umá, obeying the impulses of her heart, threw herself down at his feet. The abashed warrior looked round indecisive how to act; but, when the full and piercing tones of the suppliant rose to his ears, his eyes involuntarily rested on her soul-entrancing countenance, and never wandered but to steal a glance at the haughtier features of her sister. Bhaváni was in her seventeenth year, blooming with youth and health; but Umá was younger by three good years, and still retained all the infantile simplicity of a child. Both were extremely beautiful, and shining locks and dark black eyes they had in common; but while the maturer beauties of the one made her the lovelier woman, the juvenile appearance of the other showed her the prettier child; and Kásim gazed on both alternately with intense delight.

Umá's petition was heard with great attention. She spoke of her lost father, of the condition to which she and her sister were born, and of that to which they were now

reduced; and she beseeched the conqueror to have compassion on their youth and misery. The whole assembly looked on her with pity. But, when she solicited for herself and her sister permission to be allowed to depart to some neighbouring Hindu court, the request was unanimously objected to, and all, turning their eyes on their youthful general, shouted with one voice, "Beauty is valour's best reward." Umá hung down her head in maiden shame, while Bhaváni replied with a look of unmitigated scorn; and Kásim pressed his hand on his heart, as if endeavouring to curb its rebellious emotions.

Every care was taken to minister to the comforts and pleasure of the royal sisters. Bhaváni received such favours with an indignant frown, and was constantly revolving in her mind what she wanted opportunity to perform. Umá, on the contrary, saw in the conduct of the Arab general much to admire and to love; and, when reproved by her sister, and reminded to remember him with nothing but hatred, would often endeavour, in meek accents, to vindicate his fame. The one regarded him only as the murderer of her father, the conqueror of her country, and the predestined victim of her vengeance; the other beheld in him the protector of her honour, and a kind and agreeable person to speak to. The partiality of the latter began gradually to partake of the nature of a more tender feeling; and Kásim, who could read the secrets of her heart in her open nature, was often tempted to give way to his emotions. But he had already made up his resolution, and, lest weakness should make him deviate from it, had backed it with a vow pledging his soul to destruction should he fail to abide by it, and with rigid self-denial he controlled himself. It is true that he spoke to her, and listened to her words with breathless delight; and not to love her was morally impossible. But he loved her only as a brother might love a fond sister—no more; and he only waited for an opportunity to send her and her sister, in perfect purity, as a priceless tribute to the sacred Commander of the Faith.

ful. That opportunity was not long in occurring; and the fair couple were soon wafted to the holy city of Damascus, into the Kaliph's *hárem*.

Mighty glad was Kaliph Wálid, of the house of Ommyyáh, on receiving such handsome presents from a favourite general. They were worthy a prince to give, and a Kaliph to receive; and the name of Kásim was registered in letters of gold amongst the most godly followers of Islámism. Bhaváni, baulked of her designs, now bore a mortified look, in which there was no trace of her former haughtiness; and Umá drooped as a drooping lily, seemingly without a cause. But nevertheless mighty glad was Kaliph Wálid to have such beauties in his *hárem*,

It was the first night after her arrival at Damascus, and Bhaváni was tossing in uneasiness on her bed of down, cursing the folly which had made her trust the mystical hints of a phantom, when lo! that phantom stood before her. The maiden started.

"Why startest thou, fair lady?" croaked the hag; "is my visit unwelcome?"

"Unwelcome? no!" returned the courageous girl with blunt straightforwardness. "But, mother, thou didst promise largely. That promise has come to naught. Comest thou to flout my credulity?"

"I come to help thee to thy vengeance," was the grave reply.

"What, when the object lies in a far land, out of my reach?"

"Out of thy reach, maiden, but not of Wálid's. Canst thou not stir the Kaliph against thy father's murderer?"

"Mother, that murderer is the Kaliph's friend, and who am I but an utter stranger? Surely thou mockest." The hag returned no reply in words, but what she would have said found way by some inexplicable process into the maiden's heart, and in the next moment the phantom disappeared.

When Bhaváni was conducted to the presence of Wálid the ecstasy of the Kaliph knew no bounds. She had just

reached the full maturity of womanhood, and stood before her enraptured lover even as one of the houris of his promised paradise. His eyes were rivetted on her form, and his senses quite bewildered. Bhaváni in a moment felt her influence, and burst into a flood of tears. The astonished Kaliph was at a loss to interpret her emotion, and endeavoured with many cheering words to comfort her. When, however, he took her by the hand she hastily withdrew it.

"I am not worthy of your notice, great leader of the Faithful," said she; and then in a hesitating tone she added, "Kásim has rifled me of my richest treasure."

The eyes of the Kaliph flashed fire, and his beard quivered with rage. "Slave, and the son of a slave, as he is," roared out the Commander of the Faithful, "how dared he to insult me thus? But he shall rue the day he did it. By the Prophet he shall!"

Months after months passed away. One fine morning, while Bhaváni and her sister were walking on a terrace in the palace, an eunuch came, and, making his obeisance, stood before them with folded arms.

"Speak, slave, what wills thy master?" demanded Bhaváni of the intruder.

"Nothing, lady!" was the reply; "but Mahomed Kásim is come from the far east to pay his respects to the Sultánás, and waits their pleasure."

Bhaváni received the announcement with great confusion and fear, but a beam of gladness played on the features of her guileless sister.

"Will thy master suffer him to see us?" asked Bhaváni of the slave.

"You have only to choose, lady," was the submissive reply.

"Conduct him hither then."

The slave went back and returned again, but he conducted nobody to their presence. Something he brought in his hand carefully wrapped round, and, while the sisters watched his proceedings in silence, he uncased

what he had brought, and laid it at their feet. It was the head of Mahomed Kásim ! Bhaváni was overjoyed at the sight ; but it was a death-blow to the tender-hearted Umá. She never recovered from the shock it gave her ; and, when the astonished Kaliph heard that Kásim had done him no wrong, he cursed his easy credulity, and rent his beard.

THE BEAUTY OF KANOIJ.

It was in the winter of the year 1018 A.D. that the army of Máhmood of Ghizni, recently recruited from the warlike countries of Turkestán, Máver-ul-nere, and Kho-rássán, invested the far-famed city of Kanouj. Keeping himself close to the mountains in his descent to India, Máhmood had crossed the great rivers where they are easily forded ; and then, turning abruptly towards the south, had so unexpectedly presented himself before the capital of the Ráhtores, that, but for its strong defences, it would certainly have at once fallen into his hands. As it was, however, it still offered some show of resistance, though neither besiegers nor besieged expected that it would be able to hold out long.

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It was a glorious sight that lay before the Mahomedan army. The night was not far advanced ; and the moon which broke through the transparent air of the climate, shone calmly over the immense encampment of the besiegers, while it touched with a mellow light the summit of the heavy-ascending towers and palaces of the city before them, and glistened with even a sweeter radiance on the pellucid waters of the Ganges which swept below.

There were many loiterers lingering in the streets of the capital. Some, as if unconscious of the siege and war without, were playing on the dulcimer or the lute, or

listening in indolence to the songs of female enchantresses robed in silk and gold ; others, seated on the banks of the broad river, upon marble ghâts whose steps descended far into the bosom of the waters, were conversing with eager and animated gestures, probably about the expected issue of the contest ; while a few, absorbed in their own thoughts, were gazing intently, either on the moon or stars, or at some similar object quite as foreign to the ideas which engrossed their mind.

At this moment a man, with downcast eyes and arms folded, was seen passing through the streets alone. He passed unnoticed, for the crowd, intent on their own pleasures, observed him not ; or, if any among them did notice him, it was only to remark how unfashionably he was dressed. Thus he passed on through the beleaguered city, unchecked and unchallenged even by the sentries at their posts, till his form was lost in the narrow and winding streets which traversed the commercial section of the metropolis.

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It was midnight in the streets of Kanouj. The gay multitude had all retired to rest, and over their quiet houses the moonlight shone with exceeding lustre, while the streets were hushed in silence so profound that nothing disturbed their stillness save the occasional voice of the watchman, or the sharp barking of dogs, or the lowing of cattle. This stillness was suddenly broken by the voice of a female shrieking for help ; and immediately after, two tall figures, well wrapped from head to foot, to evade discovery, were seen endeavouring to drag away from her home a young lady, who was vainly trying to waken the inmates of the house to her aid. The agitation and terror of the female almost choked her voice, and one of the ruffians tried to stop her screams by laying his hands on her mouth. All the three were so earnestly engaged in the struggle that they did not perceive the approach of a fourth person to the spot, who, coming upon them un-awares, at once took the side of the weaker party.

"Back, traitors, back the midst of them ; "reluctant, and " shouted he, placing himself in the way. "Kásim, ease the damsel, or by Heaven ye die."

"Ha ! what meddling dost thou interfere with my sport ? "vered fool art thou that darest to interfere with my sport ? " said one of the two muffled men. "Cut down the villain," said the other, "Ojá, and I will see you safe through the consequences."

But the stranger had anticipated the movement, and ere the party added he pressed could carry out his master's mandate, he felt the cold steel six inches deep in his heart, and fell sprawling at his feet.

"Curse thee, thou interfering villain," broke out the other man, "seest thou what thou hast done ? Thou shalt answer for this violence to-morrow ; and I swear the oath of a prince that thou shalt have the gallows for it."

"Let me see thee, the morrow dawn," said the intruder, "and thou wilt find myself, prince, or whosoever thou art, that thy threat will not be empty. Unhand the woman now, and get off, or thou too shalt die the death of thy comrade. Thou pollywog, thou test the very air ; away."

For a moment the prince remained irresolute ; then, it being perhaps that discretion was the better part of valour, he took to his heels, muttering curses and imprecations on the wretch who had so untimely interfered, and prevented the consummation of his villainy.

The woman was now left alone with the stranger. "Ah ! am I safe from that bad man," muttered the girl, clinging to the feet of her protector in gratitude.

"Safe ! yes, you are safe, my child," answered the stranger, as he raised her kindly and encouragingly, and offered to conduct her to her house, from which they were only a few paces off.

The girl, assured of her safety, now felt so faint that she could hardly stand ; and the stranger was compelled to support her in his arms.

By this time the household of the maiden were all up. "Speak, Párvati ! in mercy speak ! say where hast thou

been at this hour of the night, with this strange man?" asked her father, who had been looking for her all over the house in vain. The daughter, however, was unable to answer. She flung herself on her father's neck, and wept floods of tears; while the stranger hastened to explain the circumstances under which he had come to her aid.

"Ah! is that true? Speak, Párvati, and relieve thy father's anxiety."

"Yes, father, all that the stranger says is true; and I fear many dangers await us still."

"I understand thee, my child. It must be the prince Yásovi who is persecuting thee yet. But let the morrow dawn, and I will appeal to his royal father himself. Korrá cannot refuse me justice."

It may be necessary at this place to mention that Korrá was the king of Kanouj, and Yásovi his heir-apparent, at the time when Máhmood of Ghizni laid siege to the Ráhtore capital. Korrá was, in his way, a remarkable man. He was not a great soldier, nor had he a commanding appearance; but his talents were of an extraordinary character, and he managed the affairs of the state with an ability rarely equalled. The prince, on the contrary, was a well-looking but worthless fellow, whose wild excesses disgusted everybody, and promised nothing but future troubles to the land. His personal appearance was striking, for he had a handsome face and a muscular form; and there was a certain grace about him which made him very fascinating, especially to women. But this was all he had to boast of. Brains he had none, and his mind was a complete void; while his life was entirely engrossed in vicious pleasures. Of course he had friends and companions to humour his profligacy; and he has been introduced to the reader in the very act of prosecuting one of his wanton follies, not the only one of the kind he had been engaged in.

The object of his persecution, Párvati, was the daughter of a merchant named Bunbeer. She was the child of his

age, and he had none other; she was necessarily much beloved. She was besides very beautiful, and as such almost extorted his affection. Her form was of the lightest shape consistent with the roundness of female beauty, and there was something in it of an elastic and elf-like grace which enhanced her loveliness. Her luxuriant hair was dark, and contrasted beautifully with a clear and lustrous complexion, which even in more northern climates would have been deemed fair; and her features were so exquisite and mellowed with an expression of softness and purity, that she almost seemed a being of a higher order than those among whom she moved.

A girl so beautiful could not long be without many admirers; but as yet she had given away her heart to none. She was courted and caressed by everybody; none accosted her but as the "dearest" and the "fairest;" all her female acquaintances loved her well; and, as for the men, they actually adored her. But all this admiration and love had not turned her head; and she was still as good, sweet, and diffident a girl as ever. Unfortunately, the prince of Kanouj was among her many admirers, and this exposed her to insult and danger. She had all along tried to discourage him, but by so doing had only inflamed her graceless admirer the more; and of late she had cause to fear for her personal safety, as he had openly avowed his intention to carry her off. How the attempt was made and frustrated has been told.

On the morning after the incident narrated occurred, the Mahomedan army, by a sudden attack, succeeded in storming the defences of Kanouj; and the town immediately fell into the hands of the enemy, the worn-out and scanty remnants of the garrison mustering, with their king at their head, to throw themselves at the mercy of their conqueror. Máhmood received them with great generosity, and even refused to accept Korrá's submission, treating him more as a brother than as an enemy. He was as politic as brave, and knew that his cause in India would be better served by a show of generosity,

than by crushing the power of the Ráhtores at once. Korrá was therefore admitted to his friendship, and the inhabitants of Kanouj spared both ignominy and violence.

With Korrá to pay submission to the conqueror came forth the whole of the royal family, including the heir-apparent, Yásovi. Máhmood received the prince with a smile; while Yásovi, recognising in him the victor of the night's affray, stood almost petrified with astonishment, scarcely venturing to perform his obeisance.

"You threatened last night to bring me to account on the morrow, young man," at last said the king of Ghazni to the prince. "Let me hear what you accuse me of, and I shall try to meet your charges." Yásovi held down his head with shame. "Well, then, it seems you have nothing to say against me. Now, youth, answer the charges I have to prefer against you before your father. I saw you last night violently carrying off the daughter of one of your father's subjects. I rescued her from your power. Can you deny it?" Yásovi still held down his head; while Máhmood, turning to his father, asked him, "Korrá, what punishment do your laws assign to such a culprit?"

"Our laws," answered the shrewd Korrá, "have henceforth no force in Kanouj, for the law of Máhmood has from this day become the law of Korrá. Declare the punishment and inflict it on the criminal yourself."

"Then let him marry the girl he has insulted," said the Mahomedan king. "He owes her that reparation at least. Send for the maiden and her father, and I will settle the matter before I go."

The maiden and her father were sent for, and, arriving shortly after, were ushered into the presence. Both instantly recognised the protector of their honour, and fell down at his feet. Máhmood raised them kindly, and told them how he had arranged matters with their king. Bunbeer was delighted to hear the joyful news. He had never dreamed of such a noble alliance, and expressed a

satisfaction with great vehemence. But Párvati looked afflicted, and even heaved a deep sigh.

"Nay, my sweet girl," said Máhmood, "if some other fortunate youth reigns in your heart, I shall not lend my power to make you miserable. You have only to say the word, and I will dissolve the match I have made." But the maiden said nothing in reply. She only raised her eyes and fixed them on him, with a look so fond and suppliant that Máhmood started and felt confused, as the conviction rushed on his mind that he was the party beloved. The maiden seemed to read his thoughts, and, when he averted his face, she hung down her head and burst into tears.

For three days the king of Ghazni tarried in the neighbourhood of Kanouj. On the third was celebrated, with superb magnificence, the marriage of Yásovi, the son of Korrá, with Párvati, the daughter of Bunbeer. Máhmood graced the ceremony with his presence; and, after it was over, he took the damsel by the hand, and, with a voice almost choked by his feelings, blest her. "May all the bliss that your wishes can form," said he, "be yours through life, and a place among the houris after death." He then held out his hand to her, which she raised to her lips, while her scalding tears fell fast upon it. Then, turning to Yásovi, Máhmood commended the girl to his kindness. "I have never seen such worth and beauty allied together," said he; "be deserving of her, and you cannot but be happy."

The imperial tents were instantly struck, and Máhmood called up all the force of religion to forget the lovely heathen, whose image for a long time after disturbed his calmer reflections.

THE BATTLE OF TIROURI.

THE rivalry between the Choháns and the Ráhtores was at its height. Prithu Rái, the king of Ajmere, had succeeded Anang Pál on the throne of Delhi, and Jayachánd, rájáh of Kanouj, could ill brook the success of a rival and a relative. He had accordingly refused to acknowledge the supremacy of the young Chohán, and even to fulfil a long-standing contract of bestowing on him his foster-daughter, Sunjogtá, to whose willing ears the valiant Prithu had long poured his tenderest vows. The spirited Chohán, unused to such affronts, had thereupon, at the head of a select body of soldiers, surprised the king of Kanouj in his own castle, in the midst of a great feast, and carried off the fair Sunjogtá, though surrounded by the chivalry of the land; and Jayachánd could ill bear the indignity thus put upon him, perhaps the more so because he felt his inability to avenge it.

At this period Yeásuludeen Ghori was the reigning prince of Ghazni; while the real sovereign power in it was exercised by his brother Sháhábudeen. The latter had long cast an anxious eye on the fertile plains of Hindustán; but the power of the Hindu princes was great, and he did not feel himself to be strong enough to cope with them all. A hundred-thousand armed warriors guarded the Chohán frontiers alone, and there were thirty thousand horsemen besides ready at a moment's notice to come to their aid. The army of Jayachánd was almost equally numerous; and the chiefs of Mewár and Anhalwára also, had their own independent forces, which, though less in number, were by no means to be despised. These were disheartening odds to contend with; but Sháhábudeen Ghori was not a man to despair.

The constant anxiety which preyed on his mind had, however, so affected Sháhábudeen's health that he was confined to his couch for several days by a fever. He recovered from this very slowly; and, in the hope that a

walk round the breezy battlements of his castle would do him good, he mounted upon them every morning for a stroll, his eyes gliding over the wild prospect on all sides, to the verge of the horizon. While thus getting refreshed and invigorated, he one day descried at a distance what appeared to be a small moving speck. As it drew nearer he could clearly make out a body of men in arms—very few in number—approaching one of the gates of the city. Their white flag denoted that they were coming on an errand of peace, and their costume proclaimed them to be natives of Hindustán. This completed the invalid's restoration to health, for it sent a thrill of ecstasy through his heart. The ponderous portals of the city were ordered to be instantly unbarred, and Sháhábudeen gave the strangers an immediate audience in the hall of state.

The errand of the messengers was soon explained. They had been deputed by Jayachánd, king of Kanouj, to solicit the powerful assistance of the king of Ghazni against the young Chohán rájá of Delhi, and brought valuable presents for the acceptance of Yeásuludeen, and their master's promise to cede large territories to him if he rendered the assistance applied for. At first Sháhábudeen affected to be averse to enter into treaties which would involve the Ghorians in hostilities with such a powerful warrior as Prithu Rái; but he gradually gave in to their importunity with seeming reluctance, and at last granted them a promise that the aid asked for would be given, which Yeásuludeen, who sat with smileless composure at a little distance from his brother, confirmed with his nod of approbation. The ambassadors being fully satisfied then rose and withdrew, and glad was old Jayachánd to receive the tidings they brought to him.

Sháhábudeen Ghori never made a promise which was not kept; and completing his preparations quickly, he was able, within a short interval after the return of the envoys, to enter India and approach the frontiers of Delhi.

"You see, friends!" said he, addressing his chiefs, "our only hope of gaining a sure footing in this country

rests, rather in the dissensions of the infidels, than, strong as we are, in the vigour of our arms. The population of Hindustán is numerous, and the armies of the several princes by no means contemptible. We have indeed the jackal Jayachánd just now on our side, but the lion Prithu may get other beasts of the forest—I mean other princes of the land—to aid him. This we must vigilantly prevent; and, if we are only quick in our movements, and give no time to the princes to deliberate, Delhi will soon become our own. Our best wisdom, friends, lies in celerity.”

“Light of the Faith!” answered his chieftains, “behold, we are ready.”

* * * * *

It was a sultry evening, and the brave Prithu and his youthful bride were enjoying themselves in the cool recesses of the zenáná, surrounded by the female attendants of the queen, who emulated each other in singing songs extolling the valour of their king. Sunjogtá delighted in the repetition of these verses, and, it is said, most of them were of her own composition, though they came ostensibly through Chund, the poet of the court. She loved her lord with an intense affection, and never tired in hearing his praises; and all his protestations to stop their recitation availed little, for the women of the palace delighted to please their youthful mistress. They were thus spending the evening hour, with the light of the young moon just beginning to stream upon them, when intelligence was brought to the king of the irruption of the Ghorians on the confines of his empire.

Nothing could exceed the pleasure of Prithu Rái on receiving this stirring news. With a spring he left the side of his dear wife, and eagerly snatched his sabre from where it hung on the wall. “Bid our poets sing the stirring war-songs of our glorious forefathers!” he exclaimed, “or let the voice of music be mute; the Káfir waits for us on the field, and Prithu has no appetite for love when bearded by enemies in his den:” and his eyes

flashed fire,' and he looked a hero already, prepared to lead his armies to conquer.

The songs of the maidens were hushed as ordered, and they retired from the presence of the king. Even Sunjogtá spoke not; but she gazed with anxious love upon the countenance of her lord, and then, rising from her seat, flung her arms around his neck, her cheeks glowing, her eyes sparkling, and her beautiful form dilated in sympathy and admiration. But other emotions again came upon her, and the tears sprung to her eyes. Prithu observed the dew-drops, and kindly kissed them away.

"Remember, love, your own favourite song," said he, "that none but the brave deserve the fair;" then, calling out to one of his attendants, he directed him to summon his warriors by the break of day, and to tell his valiant brother Samarsi, to be ready for starting a bloody chase.

The bard Chund gives a grand description of the preparations which were made for the coming struggle. When the Chohán forces drew up in the morning, the light of the sun, says the poet, reflected from their armour, seemed from a distance as the conflagration of a city; and the snorting of horses, the shrill yell of elephants, and the shouts of veteran warriors combined to raise a most spirit-stirring sound. Thick, serried, line after line, column upon column, the army spread before the gates of Delhi, anxiously awaiting the arrival of their chief; while the royal standard fluttered above them in imperial pride, its folds of gold glittering in the sun-beams like the ripples of the sea.

In the meanwhile, within the zenáná was being enacted a scene of melting pathos and love. The Maháránee, with tears in her eyes, detained her warrior in her arms, unwilling to allow him to go forth to the war. Thrice in the visionary hour of night she had seen a phantom passing and repassing before her eyes, and the phantom had spoken to her, and his words were cruel and full of alarm. "Thy husband's life is on the Mahomedan's sword; beware!" was her first vision. In her next, she saw her

lord coming back from the war, his armour stained with blood, but not his own; while the phantom said unto her, "Behold, he comes in glory; go, and welcome him to thy arms." But the third time, oh heaven and earth! she saw her loved one bound in chains, lying on the floor of a dungeon in a far country, and the blood weltering from his wounds, while the exulting phantom said to her with the screech of a fury, "His end is near."

"Thou shalt not go, my love—my life!" said Sunjogtá, as she strained her husband to her heart. "Guard thou thy palace and thy consort; but thou shalt not go forth to die."

The pleased warrior smiled and thanked her love, but he broke from her encircling arms. "Sunjogtá! what hast thou said? Shall Prithu, the boast of his race, tarry at home when the Mahomedans and Ráhtores insultingly threaten his empire? Nay, forget not that thou art a soldier's wife, and that ill does it become thee to dissuade me from the war."

"But if thou shouldst fall?"

"I can fall but once, and if I fall in war, and am lamented for by thee, then shall the soul of Prithu rest in peace!"

"But what will become of me then? where shall I go? who shall give me shelter?" said the sobbing wife. "But no! I do wrong to withhold thee," she added, suddenly pausing, and drying up her tears. "Prithu, thou hast taught me my duty. Sun of the Choháns! pride of your race! boast of the gods who made thee! Go forth and conquer! Think not of me when you charge on the foe. If you fall, I know how to follow you! Come with victory and fame, or come not back to these arms again! Death shall not part us; are we not one?"

The prince gazed on the beautiful features of the enthusiast with admiration. "There spoke a warrior's bride!" said he. "Thy words shall be as a trumpet's voice to me on the field of battle. Let him beware who crosses my path!"

But the heroine yielded again to the woman as she exclaimed with alarm, "My father! wilt thou not spare my father?"

"Thy father, love! bears me the bitterest hatred," answered Prithu, "but this hand will never smite him, for thy dear sake."

"Thanks, thanks," murmured Sunjogtá; and then the dreams of the night recurred to her recollection, and she hurst afresh into tears, and fell sobbing on her parting soldier.

"Dost thou trust in dreams so much, my dearest," said Prithu, "that they disturb thee yet? Why, if thy dream must prove true, I will return victorious before I fall?"

"Ay, so said the phantom," replied Sunjogtá, and a proud smile played transiently on the features of the warrior's bride.

Prithu took advantage of the moment, and they parted. When he was gone the haughty breast which had enthusiastically fanned the heroism of her husband so recently sunk beneath its own fears, and Sunjogtá dropped on the floor of her apartment in a swoon. There was no spy to witness the weakness of the soldier's bride, and she recovered gradually and came to herself; but her eyes soon lost their wonted lustre and her steps their usual buoyancy, for her heart went with her husband to the field of battle.

When the Chohán army, headed by Prithu, Chund his brother, and Samarsi his brother-in-law, came up to the plains of Tirouri, they found there the combined army of Jayachánd and Sháhábudeen ready to give battle. In fact, the ardour of the soldiery on both sides was so great that they fell upon each other before the words of command were given; and this enthusiasm was sustained throughout the action, which rendered it a particularly well-fought and bloody one. The Chohán leader was early singled out by the revengeful Ráhtore; who fell upon him with the fury of a tiger. But the wrath of Jayachánd mastering his skill, he found himself in a short

time disarmed, and entirely at the mercy of his youthful opponent.

"Rise up, old king," said Prithu, "thou hast been a bitter enemy to me, but Sunjogtá pleads for thy life."

"She does not plead for mine, prince?" said a strong-built Moslem warrior, forcing out his way through the crowd. "Behold, great warrior, thy brother's murderer!"

"My brother's murderer!" exclaimed Prithu, casting a hurried glance around the field. "Káffir! thou hast not told the truth. My brother bleeds; but when was the arm of a Moslem strong enough to take the life of a Chohán prince? Come forward, friend; by killing I will ennoble thee!"

The Moslem advanced and attacked his opponent furiously. The contest was deadly; both the combatants fought regardless of their lives. A severe stroke on the head at last levelled the Káffir to the earth; but before the Chohán's dagger could drink his blood, a multitude of picked Mahomedan soldiers came to his aid. The baulked Rájpoor foamed with fury to see his victim rescued. Several of the rescuers fell beneath his sword, while the rest hastily retreated with the wounded Sháhábudeen to the rear.

The rout was complete. The Mahomedans were pursued to the blue waters of the Niláb, and Jayachánd retreated to Kanouj with shame and vexation. One body of the enemy still kept their ground. It was a corps of foreign warriors, who had volunteered their services to Sháhábudeen to win renown. They were repeatedly called upon to surrender, for admiring their valour, the Chohán was desirous of sparing their lives; but they fought to the last, till their ranks were thinned to a solitary man; and, when he was disabled, he threw himself into the Jumná, his steel armour carrying him down to the bottom at once. "Thus let me die!" said Samarsi, who had disarmed this last warrior, and now stood admiring his courage. "This was a hero indeed!"

Many inquiries were made with a view to ascertain who he and his followers were, but nothing beyond scraps of vague information was received. On their captured ensign was seen the mark of a cross, and they were thence believed to be a fugitive band of crusaders from the distant shores of Palestine. How they came to be attached to the cause of Sháhábudeen Ghori was never clearly explained.

The rout of the Mahomedan army was complete. With his shattered forces Sháhábudeen Ghori retreated to Ghazni, to brood over his present defeat, and plan fresh schemes for the conquest of India; while Prithu, at the head of his victorious soldiers, went back to his capital, flushed with success. When the news of his victory and return reached the Maháránee, she rose from her couch, which she had never left since his departure, and, bathing and anointing her person, decked herself in her bridal garments, and advanced, at the head of her females, to the outskirts of the city to welcome him. Prithu dismounted from his horse the moment he saw her, and running up to her, clasped her to his bosom; and, reading her a lecture on the futility of dreams, added with a smile, "But the best part of thy vision, love, has proved to be true."

"God be praised for it!" answered the impassioned wife, "and may He avert the rest!"

KUTTUBUDEEN IBEK; THE SLAVE KING OF DELHI.

It was at the great slave-market at Ghazni, early one morning, that several groups of unfortunate human beings were exposed for sale. There were stalwart labourers, women of fair complexion, half-naked children—all huddled together in groups; while around them were gathered

a host of idlers, examining each with rude and vulgar scrutiny, many further embittering their condition by brutal jests and jeering. Some of the more sensitive of the slaves were to be seen bathed in tears—especially young women, who hung down their heads in shame. But the children, unconscious of the utter wretchedness of their condition, were even there chasing each other with shouts of pleasure.

Unlike the rest of his years, Kuttubudeen Ibek, a little boy between seven and eight years old, stood with down-cast looks. Crushed in spirit by the death of an only friend, a *fakir* who had been his protector from infancy, he was now thrown upon the market by a designing knave, who was one of the creditors of the deceased; and alive to the misery of his condition, he could hardly suppress his tears. Purchasers crowded on the platform, and many were the insulting remarks which the unfortunate boy was obliged to endure.

"For what will you sell this fellow?" asked one, in a gruff voice.

"A hundred dinars" was the prompt reply of the dealer.

But the would-be purchaser shook his head and said, "He is not worth fifty; his little-finger is broken."

A more liberal bid, however, was at last obtained, and Kuttubudeen Ibek brought a hundred dinars to his owner.

"And who is my purchaser?" asked the timid Ibek, when the sale was over, of the hickory-faced owner who had brought him to market.

"Why did not you see, you fool?" was the answer. "You are always hanging down your head, as if you were a maiden come to marry. I could have made two hundred dinars of you, if you had borne yourself properly. Look up, there's your purchaser;" and he pointed out a well-dressed, respectable-looking old man, to whom all around seemed to show much respect and attention. Kuttubudeen asked of a bystander who he was. "The

agent of the king," was the reply, and it brought a flush of gladness to the child's proud heart.

We cannot give little Ibek's history in detail. The scanty materials available to us show that he early became a great favourite with his royal master. Having no children of his own, Mahomed Ghori took great delight in educating his retainers, and training them for the offices of the state. All his personal pages, of course, shared his attention, but none so much as the little boy with the broken finger; and, his progress in learning keeping pace with his master's partiality, the ragged stripling, who had stood weeping on the platform of the slave-market, was within a few years after, at the early age of sixteen, raised high in office, and appointed the king's master of the horse.

It is well known to the historic reader that in this capacity Kuttubudeen Ibek followed his master in his great invasions of India. How Mahomed Ghori succeeded in defeating Prithu Rái, how the Chohán sovereignty broke down in consequence, it is not our purpose to narrate. The valour and exertions of young Ibek won golden opinions from every tongue, and Mahomed was not slow in rewarding his favourite.

* * * * *

It was a cold, winter night. Mahomed Ghori was encamped on the banks of the Jhelum. He was to hold that night a Privy Council for choosing a delegate to be left behind in charge of his Indian conquests, and all the principal *omráhs* had been invited to attend. Kuttub, of course, was to be there, and he was hastening thither, sumptuously dressed, when he was stopped by a wretched beggar, almost naked, and shivering with cold.

"I am out on business, and can't help you, my good man, just now," said Kuttub, and was about to pass on. But the beggar with trembling hands laid hold of his coat, and in the name of God, the All-Holy, implored him to have pity on his destitute condition.

Kuttub paused. It was only the struggle of a moment. He stripped himself of his costly apparel, and gave it to

the beggar; then, putting on the cloak of one of his retainers, he hurried to the council-room.

"Ho, Ibek!" exclaimed the king, when he observed him in his footman's dress, "what fancy is this?"

Kuttub held down his head; when his servant stepped forward, and, after apologizing for his boldness, explained how matters stood. The admiring sovereign gazed earnestly at his favourite for a long time, then, clapping his hands, he dismissed the council, saying, "I have chosen my delegate, gentlemen; you may retire."

Kuttub was left in India at the head of a large army, and fixed his head-quarters in the town of Koram. Young and enthusiastic, he was not satisfied with the extent of his master's conquests, but determined to extend them, and to establish for himself a separate principality. With this view he early turned his longing eyes on the city of Delhi, which was still held by the family of the deceased Prithu Rái. He was, however, wary as well as brave, and took time to mature his schemes.

It was at the close of a fine summer's day, when the sun was setting upon the walls of the old grey towers of Delhi, that a dashing horseman was seen to alight before the western gate of the city. A groom had been waiting there for him, and, throwing the bridle into his hands, the young soldier entered the capital. There was nothing peculiar about him, except the beauty of his features; and he proceeded on his way almost without exciting any notice.

The gloaming increased; the night advanced rapidly; the citadel of Delhi was soon buried in profound repose. The sentinel was asleep at his post on the ramparts of the fort, and the audacious stranger had passed him and entered the garrison. He marked with pleasure the supineness that reigned within, and passed and repassed from one division of the fort to another, without exciting the least suspicion or alarm. His attempt to pass out, however, was not quite so successful. In the midst of a long yawn the sentinel had perceived a stranger, and he

challenged him with the usual, "Who goes there?" But the usual answer, "A friend," would not satisfy him.

"Stop, friend, and tell us who you are, and what is your business here?" roared out the awakened Argus, loud enough to disturb all the inmates of the neighbouring barracks.

"You have nothing to fear from me," expostulated the stranger, approaching nearer to the sentinel; "I am a soldier out of employ, and came to the commandant to ask for a place. I was detained longer than usual, and am therefore passing out at this late hour."

"That story won't serve thee, my friend," was the gruff reply. "If you came to the commandant, go and bring us his orders to let you pass."

"I will, if nothing else will satisfy you;" and, saying this, the stranger affected to turn back, and then, suddenly falling upon the unwary soldier, pierced him through the neck with his short dagger.

The man on duty fell with a groan. The whole citadel was now in arms; but the daring intruder had made good his retreat. He passed through the same gate by which he had entered the fort, mounted his fleet charger, and outstripped his pursuers.

There was great consternation in the city of Delhi. It did not require much shrewdness to guess who the spy was, or at least from what quarter he came; and all anticipated a prompt attack from the Moslem host stationed at Koram, an anticipation which was not long in being fulfilled. Two days after, at an early hour, came forth a brilliant cavalcade of horsemen, followed by a numerous army on foot, led by Kuttubudeen in person. The rájá in command, named Hemráj, came forth quickly to give him a warm reception. He was strong in numbers, though lax in discipline, and had all the bravery of the Chohán blood in his veins. As he pointed out the Moslem host to his faithful followers, he told them pithily that they must conquer or die. In vain some of his more experienced officers advised him to await a siege. To such he had one

answer: "Kuttub knows the disordered state of our citadel well. We will meet him on better terms on the field."

They met accordingly. Where the fighting took place the river Jumná was discoloured by blood. The Choháns fought with great heroism. Greater heroism was hardly displayed by the enthusiastic followers of Ibek. But there was a total want of discipline in the Hindu ranks, and they were mowed down like grass. A few fled into the fort, and endeavoured to hold it against the enemy, but they were too weak to do so successfully. Thus fell the city of Delhi into Moslem hands; and thus was the empire of the Mohamedans founded by a slave.

When the news of Ibek's achievements reached Mahomed Ghori, he was no longer pleased with his favourite's good fortune. Even kings are prone to jealousy; and Mahomed Ghori, at the height of his glory, envied the triumphs which graced the brow of his slave. He thought of recalling him at once to Ghazni, on the pretext that he had undertaken an unauthorized war. Nay, there are those who own that he plotted against his life. This is at least certain, that he wanted to pull him down a little from the elevation he had attained.

"Are our despatches ready?" asked the king of his chief scribe, with a face that spoke of strange matters at heart.

"Ay, my liege," was the reply.

"And the messenger and his followers," (meaning a general-officer, and a force fifteen thousand strong;) "are they ready too?"

"Ay, my lord."

"They may go then," said the king.

"No! no! my good king, not if they go to bring dishonour on your father's son."

The king turned round to the speaker. It was an old beggar who had thus ventured to interrupt his sovereign's commands. He had broken through the guards of the palace, and stood erect in the royal presence.

"Who art thou, father, that darest to intrude where thou art not wanted?" sternly demanded the king; "and whom dost thou mean by calling him my father's son?"

"I mean your step-brother—once your favourite—I mean your own little Ibek."

"And is he my father's son?"

"Yes, king; know in him the son of the unfortunate Roshinára, whom your father murdered with his own hands, in a fit of jealousy, which even a rival queen—your own sainted mother—so strongly condemned. Then I, her father, and this, her child, were banished for ever from the court of Ghor. Your mother pitied the child, but could not help it. I committed the boy to the care of a hermit, and went to Persia, brooding schemes of vengeance. You know how my schemes came to naught. I have been reduced to beggary; but Alláh is just, and my grandchild reigns on the throne of Delhi!"

"But how are we to believe this story? Have you any proofs, father? We were told that our little brother was years ago torn by wild beasts on the mountains."

"No, he was not. I heard the same story, and believed it for a time. I believed it till I saw the child with my own eyes on the banks of the Jhelum, when he was hastening to your presence. You want proofs. Ibek has a broken finger to prove his birth. When his poor mother was barbarously murdered, she fell down with her child, who was then at her breast, and all the old *omráhs* of your court know that the child's finger was broken by the fall."

The star of Kuttubudeen Ibek was now dominant. His new conquests were conferred upon him with fresh honours by the court of Ghazni; and, to complete his happiness, the tidings of his royal birth were communicated to him.

THE DEATH OF MAHOMED GHORI.

THE chastisement which the Gickers received at the hand of Mahomed Ghorî is scarcely equalled by anything of the kind recorded either in ancient or modern history. The country of the Gickers formed a part of the province now called the Punjâb, and fell early into the hands of the invader, who established in it a military cantonment, from which to spread his conquests and incursions in every direction. The Gickers, notwithstanding that they were kept down with a strong hand, rebelled repeatedly, and on one occasion succeeded in resuming their own from the hands of the generals left by Mahomed. This so exasperated the king that he determined to extirpate the whole race. He attacked them at the head of a large army; drove them from place to place, as wild beasts are hunted down; and burnt their huts and cottages, laying all their places of abode desolate. Neither age, sex, nor condition was spared. The innocence of youth availed nothing, nor the tears of beauty, nor even the weakness of age. The most barbarous cruelties were mingled with the most horrible debauchery; and the object of Mahomed was almost completely attained, a few of the most desperate savages only escaping with their lives.

All this outrage was perpetrated not only under the orders, but mostly in the presence, of the king of Ghazni. One evening, after having enjoyed the horrid spectacle of rape and carnage, he was just retiring to his pavilion, to thank the Prophet, according to his custom, for the great victory vouchsafed to his arms, when he was interrupted by the entrance of one of the officers of the guard, who, making the usual salutations, stood before him with downcast eyes and an attitude of respect.

“Well, what brings thee here, and why dost thou stand so irresolute?” asked the king. “Hast thou anything of importance to communicate to me?”

“Light of the Faith! if you do not consider me too bold—”

"Put all apologies aside, man, and speak out briefly and boldly, as becomes a soldier," said Mahomed, cutting short the threatening preface.

"Then, in plain terms, my liege, I would ask my sovereign if religion is the sole thing dear to his heart, if the smile of woman has never stolen beneath his armour, if his heart never beat for softer meetings than encounters with the foe?"

"Bah! an odd question surely. Well, you may know that I am human, as much as other men."

"Then, my liege, with your permission I will conduct the fairest of women to your feet."

So saying he left the presence as abruptly as he had come in, the king remaining where he was with a countenance somewhat excited. In a few moments the officer returned, but not alone. He led in a young woman of such a sweet countenance as softened even the rugged heart of Mahomed. She seemed very gentle, and her tender limbs almost trembled as they approached the king. Her cheeks also were pale with fear, and bore evident traces of recent tears.

"Maiden, I fear thou hast been hardly dealt with by my rough soldiers," said Mahomed to the fair captive, as she knelt at his feet. "But fear not, thy trials are over:" then, turning to the officer of the guard he asked him, "Where did you capture this fair prize?"

"In the city," returned the soldier, "within a decent cottage we found three women kneeling before a small altar, in an attitude of devotion. They were all handsome; and we seized them at once, and brought them away from their asylum. This, as the best of the lot, has been reserved for the king."

Mahomed waved his hand, and the officer withdrew. He then spoke kindly to the maiden and endeavoured to cheer up her spirits; but the unhappy girl answered him only with tears. "Father, mother, brother, friends, are all lost to me!" exclaimed she, wringing her hands. "Oh, stubborn soul! why dost thou hold out so long!"

The king seemed somewhat affected by her grief, and pressed her to relate the history of her misfortunes. It was brief, and briefly told. Her father, she said, was a chief among the Gickers. He had one son and one daughter. The son trod in the footsteps of the sire, and his name ranked among the foremost of the rising generation. Near them lived another chief of the race, who was also a celebrated warrior; and he had a son some three years her senior, who had won great distinction, though so young. This was her betrothed lover, to whom she was to have been shortly united. But life is a dream! its joys mere illusions! In the midst of their visions of happiness the Moslems re-entered the Punjáb. Her father, her brother, and her betrothed husband were all called to the field. Of their fate she had heard nothing. When the brutal soldiers broke into their house, she, with her mother and her brother's wife, were kneeling and invoking the spirits of the mountains to guard their beloved warriors.

The girl finished her simple narration with a fresh flood of tears. Mahomed Ghori, pretending to pity her misfortunes, renewed his kind protestations, and the unsuspecting maiden threw herself entirely on his generosity. But her confidence availed nothing; it did not save her from dishonour.

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Mahomed, having settled the affairs of India, now determined to return to Ghazni. He had just commenced his march from Láhore, when one day a brace of youthful Gickers applied for permission to see him.

"How!" cried the king, a dark flush passing over his countenance. "What can the knaves want with me? But they are brave fellows," he added, "who thus voluntarily place themselves in my power. Admit them into our presence."

They were ushered in accordingly. Both were young men, and very noble specimens of their race. One had a rather melancholy mien, but the other looked round with

a flashing and scornful eye, and met even the gaze of Mahomed with indignant disdain.

"Gickers," said the king, who was the first to withdraw his gaze, "why come ye here? Art weary of your lives that ye place yourselves in my power?"

The Gickers looked up with cold, icy contempt, then muttering something between themselves in their own native tongue, which the Moslems did not understand, they altered their bearing suddenly from haughty stubbornness to meek humility, and knelt before the king.

This unexpected change of manner had its desired effect. "Speak what ye want," said Mahomed, "and ye shall have it, if it be possible to comply with your request. If not, ye shall have full liberty to depart in peace."

Thus encouraged, they beseeched him, in moving terms, to give up to them the Gicker captive, whom they named 'Gourámi Bandibáh, and whom one called his sister, and the other his wife. But Mahomed rejected their application with disdain.

"Álláh confound me," said he "if I give up to savages one before whose glance the eyes of the *houris* would be dim."

"And yet, what is she to thee? We want her because she is our own; but to thee she is nothing but a stranger."

"She is my concubine and slave," answered the king proudly; "and she whom the king has delighted to honour returns not from his *hárem*."

With sad and downcast looks the youthful Gickers left the presence; and their Gourámi Bandibáh, who watered their memory with her tears, was never told that they were still in existence. Mahomed, in fact, undisturbed in his conscience, thought no more of the unhappy family; and the march was continued, till the army halted on the banks of the Niláb, or the blue waters, a favourite name with old oriental authors for one of the upper branches of the Indus.

It was at a place called Rimick that the army encamped; and the king, to enjoy the freshness of the river-

breeze, ordered his camp to be pitched close to the river. The sun was now sinking slowly through those masses of purple clouds which belong to Indian skies, and the brawling torrent sparkled beneath his expiring beams and enhanced greatly the charming character of the spot.

"How beautiful the place is!" murmured Gourámi Bandibáh, as she lay at the feet of Mahomed, and looked upon the glistening waters.

"Yes, it is a beautiful spot, my love," replied Mahomed, gazing abstractedly on the scene: "such a spot as I should like to die in."

Why did Gourámi Bandibáh start so suddenly? What did she care whether her ravisher lived or died? Nothing. But she looked as if she had seen a spectre, and gazed earnestly for some time towards the other bank of the current. Mahomed did not observe her alarm; nor did she communicate ought to him. Shortly after they retired to their private pavilion.

It was a dark night. A band of twenty Gickers had been long watching for their prey on the opposite bank of the river, and having marked the unguarded situation which the king had selected for himself, boldly committed themselves to the waves, and swam across the tumultuous stream. It was midnight; the guards were all asleep, the lamps were burning bright, and vengeance pointed out the way. They found the king asleep. There was not a foot to stir nor a hand to rise in his defence, and several daggers were plunged into his body. It was a horrible awakening for Mahomed, for he awoke but to die. Foremost among the murderers were the two young chiefs who a few days before had demanded the liberation of the fair captive who now lay at his side. Mahomed barely saw them; it was all misty and swimming before his eyes. He turned on his side with a groan, and expired.

THE STEP-MOTHER.

THE faint, grey streaks of morning broke on the disturbed slumber of Násirudeen Máhmood. The light, feebly struggling with the yet powerful shadows of the expiring night, glimmered dimly into the interior of the prison. He awoke, or rather his eyes opened; but the sluggishness of sleep still lingered on him for a time, till gradually the ragged mattress, the grated window, and the chilliness of the cell recalled him to a consciousness of his position, and shaking off his lothargy he raised his hands in prayer, while tears ran down his manly cheeks.

Let not the reader suppose that the prisoner wept for his hard lot. Though born with the prospect of a throne, and brought up in the lap of luxury, he had hardihood enough to endure his personal miseries; and, if the persecution of his enemy had gone no further, Máhmood would have been glad to bless her. But the author of his wrongs had touched him to the quick by also persecuting the only object of his youthful affection; and the blood froze in his heart when he thought of her sufferings.

Násirudeen Máhmood, the son of Altámash, was a young man remarkable for piety and good conduct. His mother, it was suspected, was poisoned by the step-mother, who figures so prominently in our tale, and yet for a fancied resemblance between the two, he had hitherto loved the latter with all the affection of a son. But the woman had mistaken the nature of his feelings, and unable to suppress her own guilty passion, had openly avowed it in a manner which left no room for doubt or misunderstanding. Násir shrunk from her proposals with horror; and the love his step-mother felt for him was changed to bitter animosity and hatred.

But though the heart of Násir was proof against such unholy attachment, it was not the less a feeling heart, and very susceptible of love. In infancy he was brought up with a fair cousin, the Beebee Selmá, who had always been his special favourite. The emperor Altámash, ori-

ginally a slave, on coming to the throne, invited all his family to share his good fortune; and the children of his brothers grew up with his own, under the imperial eye. Násir, though not the eldest of his sons, was his father's greatest favourite, and, though it was never so plainly expressed, was looked upon generally as his heir; and chance only raised Feroze to the vacant throne. But Násir was never ambitious, and the prospect of a throne did not render him either proud or heartless. He loved Selmá with an unprincely devotion, and his father encouraged the passion, for Altámash was willing that they should marry. But ere the nuptials could be solemnized death transferred the pious king to a better world.

Feroze succeeded his father on the throne, or rather, was raised to it by his mother; but, unfit to rule himself, he transferred with pleasure the toils of state to that intriguing woman—a monster of cruelty, without one redeeming trait or virtue. The worst deeds were perpetrated at court to gratify her inhuman passions. Her rivals in the *hárem*—the other queens of the deceased emperor—were all murdered or poisoned; and the youngest prince, for being a pet in the family, shared the same fate. It was then that Násirudeen was cast into prison. He was well-prepared for this fate since his rejection of his step-mother's love, and hardly regretted it when it came.

"My part is submission to the will of Providence," said he to himself; "and I have this happiness at least, that, whatever my own sufferings may be, Selmá is not involved in them. Oh God! how grateful I feel at this moment that we are not married." He thought his love for Selmá was not fully known to his step-mother. In this he was mistaken, for jealousy hath both keen eyes and quick ears, and he found his mistake too soon.

On the sixth or seventh day of his confinement, Násirudeen was awakened from his slumber by a loud and piercing shriek from the adjoining cell. Was it possible?

Could that be her cry? No, Selma would not scream so! Raising himself he listened intently. The cry was presently repeated. There was no doubt about it now; it was her voice, and none other, that he heard. Fired by the thought of her misery, he sprang on his feet and tried to burst his chains. But the effort was fruitless. Straining his limbs he at last succeeded in approaching the aperture which commanded the cell, and there saw the semblance of a female figure reclining on the ground, with her back against the wall, and her hands raised and clasped together as if in supplication and prayer. The form seemed so thin that he doubted at first if it could be Selma's; but he was soon convinced of her identity. How long she had been there he could not guess. They had been thus placed in contiguous apartments, having a common aperture, purposely, that they might hear each other's groans and see each other's anguish. And the pain that Násirudeen felt on seeing his beloved in prison was great indeed.

Time, however, reconciled both to their lot. Entertaining no hopes of mercy, all the hours of Násirudeen were passed in preparing for his end. Except the short interval taken up in holding intercourse with his beloved, (which pleasure he could not enjoy often, as it cost him much bodily pain,) and the few hours of refreshment actually required by nature, every moment was devoted to prayer. He often exhorted Selma to be firm and patient; and she, who had so ill borne her confinement at first as almost to cause fears for her sanity, now looked forward to death with pious resignation, as promising that union and unceasing happiness which she had vainly expected in life.

But to return. When Násir awoke on the morning referred to at the outset, he threw himself on his knees and poured out his heart to God, as he did every day, in earnest supplication for Selma. At this moment he did not wish to remember harshly even her who caused them

both so much affliction. In spite of all his efforts, however, the recollections of the past forced themselves upon him, visions of earlier days and brighter prospects, of Selmá in the bloom of youth and beauty, and a kind old father smiling on their youthful loves! And then he could not suppress a murmur, and exclaimed in the bitterness of heart, "Of all tyrannies the tyranny of an inhuman step-mother is the most poignant and insufferable!"

Násir had hardly concluded his words when he heard the application of a key to the door of his cell. The door opened, and a female form stood before him. Násir knew his visitor at once, for he was accustomed to such visits. It was the cruel, hard-hearted relative he had last named.

"Hast thou considered the terms I proposed to thee?" asked the woman, in a low, deep voice.

"I have rejected them before, and reject them again," answered her prisoner. "Avaunt, tempter! tempt not my soul. Thee and thy offers I despise."

"Then thou art prepared to endure my wrath?"

"Am I not? Behold these wasted limbs where robust health bounded in streaming currents. This face was full that is now so thin and haggard. Oh, let me feel thy utmost wrath, kind mother! and I will bless thee in my dying moments."

"Thou hast despised my love. To let thee die were a mercy before thou hast felt my vengeance. But I have tortures yet. Thou knowest that thy minion is in my power. This day that minion dies; and thou shalt see that rare sight. Ha!"

Násir heaved a deep groan, and flung himself on the floor. The haughty woman turned her steps to leave the apartment. Must Selmá die? Why not? Why should not both die? But must Selmá die alone? The stupefied prisoner made one effort more, and flung himself at the feet of his imperious step-mother, and caught the hem of her garment.

"Spare her!" he exclaimed, "and Heaven will bless thee."

"Heaven is the weak mind's bug-bear," said the profligate queen; "what have I to do with Heaven?"

"Mother!"

"Unhold me!" cried the violent woman. "Thou must call me by a dearer name if thou wishest to be heard."

"Then go, thou profligate tempter!" said the despairing prisoner. "Heaven will guard its own."

"Trust then to Heaven, thou fool!" said the empress-dowager, and walked off from the cell.

The door closed with a jarring noise.

"How fearfully it speaks to despairing prisoners!" remarked the unhappy prince to himself.

The day was passed almost in unconsciousness. When night advanced, hurried steps were heard passing and re-passing the arched passage by the cell of the prisoner. And then, was not the door of Selmá's cell unlocked, and did not somebody enter it? Násir struggled to raise himself to the grated window. Yes, there sure enough was his imperious step-mother, with a lantern in her hand, looking at her quiet captive with savage satisfaction.

"I would save thee, Selmá," at last spoke the queen-dowager, almost in a kind tone. "Be of good cheer, and promise to be my friend."

Selmá returned no answer, while the queen continued speaking to her. "You know, I doubt not, why you have been confined?"

"I do."

"You shall be set free at once if you will submit to my terms."

"What terms?"

"That you swear never more to think of Násirudeen."

"I cannot do that, and I reject your terms."

"Then your fate is sealed, you die to-night."

"Be it so. I would die a thousand deaths rather than Násir should be yours."

"He shall be mine, base minion! he shall be mine, and

willingly after you are dead and gone," exclaimed the passionate woman.

"Never!" answered Násirudeen, who had hitherto been a quiet and unnoticed spectator of the scene.

The queen was rather startled by this sudden interruption, but soon regaining her composure, drily answered—"That remains to be seen."

About an hour after the door of Násir's cell was opened again, and slaves came and heaped on him some additional fetters, though he was already heavily shackled. Násir neither asked the reason, nor resisted. He knew that they were afraid of his sapless arm. Next Selmá was dragged in, bound hand and foot; and after her came the dowager-empress, and a savage-looking person with an axe in his hand. None spoke a single word for some time, till at last the empress broke silence.

"Speak, Násir, shall the murder proceed?"

"No, if it rests on my word alone," said the prisoner.

"Wilt thou return my love?"

"Thy lust? Never!" said the youth.

"Never!" exclaimed Selmá; "Násir, do not consent to her proposal. Do not sell your soul."

"Gag that base minion's mouth, and strike off her head," ordered the enraged widow.

The ruffian who accompanied her raised his axe, while Selmá closed her eyes in fear, and Násirudeen showed his consciousness only by a groan. Just then hurried steps were heard in the passage, and the door of the cell was flung ajar. Half a dozen soldiers entered in haste and surrounded the queen; while the foremost of them arrested her of high-treason, and forced her away from the prison. Selmá was at the same time conveyed to her own cell, and the chains of Násirudeen were taken off.

The timely interruption referred to was attributable to the Emperor Feroze having been suddenly deposed, and the Sultáná Riziá raised to the throne to succeed him. "Riziá Begum," says her historian, "was endowed with every princely virtue; and those who scrutinize her

actions most severely will find in her no fault but that she was a woman." But, whatever may have been her virtues, kindness towards her own kindred was not apparently of the number; for she suffered her half-brother Nasir to remain in prison, and does not seem to have taken any notice of his condition besides ordering his chains to be struck off. He remained in confinement till he was released by his nephew, the Emperor Musáood, who intrusted to him the government of Baroach; and, when that weak and foolish prince was deposed by his unruly *omráhs*, Násir was invited to that throne which the Emperor Altámash had designed for him from the first. Selmá, who had shared his adversity, shared his prosperity also, and shared it alone; for, contrary to all precedents, he took no other wife. How he fulfilled his duty to the people has been recorded by his historians.

THE MURDER OF KEIKOBÁD.

THE king was lolling on a couch of state. Around him were the minions of his pleasure, and prominently amongst them the vizier Nizámudeen, the great encourager of his vices. Keikobád was only in his eighteenth year; but extreme debauchery had already attenuated a frame never remarkable for great constitutional vigour. He was whirled in a giddy round of pleasures, which left him no time to think; and, even if he had leisure and inclination to exercise his discretion, his despicable creatures knew well how to dissuade him from doing so. The palace was reduced to a brothel; and the grandson of Gheásudeen Bulbun, whose court was graced by the presence of fifteen sovereign princes from Central Asia and a host of the best "literati of the age, lay surrounded by a motley group of parasites, panders, and concubines.

"Sing us a merry song, Nizámudeen," said the king of kings. "Why do you look so dull to-day?"

"This is no time to sing songs, my liege."

"Are *you* turned raven too? Nay, take up your proper part, my man; that gloomy look befits you not."

"Would I could smile," answered the minister; "but have you not heard, great king, that Bakarrá Khán is hastening to the capital at the head of a large army?"

"Why, what of that, Nizám? It is not meet my father should move escorted by a smaller retinue. However attended he may choose to come, he shall receive from me the duty of a son."

"A very affectionate father he must be, I presume; else wherefore this exceeding love in you? But I would advise you as a friend to be on your guard."

"Be on my guard against a father?"

"You are shocked, I see, at my suspicions; but it is wiser to suspect than be deceived. Remember, he comes not as a father, but as *his* father's heir. He comes to claim his own."

"It shall be his then; what is his is mine."

"*Is* yours! Indeed is it? But a bird in hand is worth two in the bush, they say. Let that pass. I am dumb."

Keikobád moved restlessly on his couch from one side to the other. His minister knew his heart too well not to have touched the right string. In spite of all his filial protestations the demon of suspicion had found an entrance into his mind.

"Nizám," said the king, and his voice slightly trembled as he spoke, "tell me, Nizám, how I should meet my father."

"Why, my liege, as other affectionate children do,—with love and cordiality. Renounce your throne, and if he asks your head, give that too, to prove your duty."

"Fie, my friend, you should not be angry with your king. I know you are honest and faithful to me; now tell me roundly what I should do."

"What you will do," replied the minister, "I know not, but what you should do is plain. Receive him in

open court as a disobedient governor, who has left his provinces without imperial order, and deserves therefore to be visited with the highest marks of imperial displeasure."

"Were you a king, could you receive your father thus?"

"Could I not? I could do more; snatch from the unruly parent the ensigns of my trust, take out his eyes, load him with chains, and consign him to silence and a dungeon."

"And you would advise me to act likewise?"

"Yes, I would; but you are too milk-hearted for such work, I fear."

"Oh thou fiend incarnate!" exclaimed the king; "no, Nizám, I cannot, and I will not do it. Tell me to meet him on the field, at the head of my imperial cohorts, and I will do so. Sons, ere now, have waged less justifiable wars against their fathers. But to bring him into court as a vassal in disgrace, or to abuse him, or to maltreat him, the heart of Keikobád will not permit."

"Then meet him on the field," said the wily minister, "and let the God of battles decide between you."

"Be it so," was the reply of the young king; and his parasites, panders, and concubines sang in chorus.

Bakarrá Khán was moving rapidly towards Delhi. He knew Nizámudeen's character too well to believe him to be a faithful adviser to his son. Circumstances had also made him suspect that the minister wanted only to snatch the crown himself, and he was therefore coming prepared to suppress him with a strong hand. But great was his surprise when he found his son arrayed for battle against him.

He was sorry to find his views so woefully mistaken, and was for some time indecisive how to act. He was a great, and daring warrior, and now at the head of a large army. But would it be right, he asked himself, to chastise his son for a crime that was the minister's alone? A hostile meeting with the imperial army would inevitably anni-

hilate the regal power—a consummation he did not especially wish for. Was there no alternative? Father and son drew out against each other in the order of battle. But, ere the last and irretrievable step was taken, Bakarrá Káhn had seen Keikobád from a distance. Pale and haggard was the youth whom he had reared with fondness, and the lotus eyes, which once imaged to him his sainted Shumshi Jehán, were now sunk deep in their socket from premature debauchery. The stern warrior could hardly suppress his tears. He sent a message to the imperial camp. Keikobád was alone. His father's message was addressed to his heart. No Nizám was near to check his rising feelings. The army was drawn off, and Bakarrá Khán promised an interview.

Nizámudeen gnashed his teeth when he became acquainted with these circumstances. He hastened to the king, but was denied admittance.

"By the powers," swore the wily minister, "I shall not be thwarted!" and like a good Mussulman he kept his oath.

Nizámudeen had a young wife, of whom the weak king was very fond. She had a greater ascendancy over him than even her cunning husband; and when the minister failed in any of his schemes by direct application to the king, it was sure to be accomplished through his fouler half. Keikobád sat in his *hárem* that evening with a light heart, and Nizám's beautiful wife was seated by his side. She sat with downcast eyes, which were suffused with tears.

"Ha! what art thou weeping for, my siren?" asked the enamoured prince, surprised to find her in distress.

Zugáníá was still silent.

"What, not a word—not even to me? It was never thus before. Tell me but the cause, my loveliest, and I will relieve your grief. What is the matter?"

"Nothing, my lord, that deserves your notice. I have a cruel husband—"

"Who can be done away with, if you wish it."

"No, no, I don't wish that at all. I only wish he were a little kinder to me. Oh! how cruel he was this morning!"

"How? What did he do to you?"

"Why, he told me that you are in danger, that as a good subject and faithful adviser he had given you timely warning, but that you would not listen to him; and he said that you, my dearly-beloved king, was sure to fall a sacrifice to your blindness, that there was no help for it, since you would not be advised. Oh! the cruel husband to pain me thus!"

"Is that all, Zumániá? Be of good cheer, then, for my case is not so bad as Nizám apprehends. He sees danger where there is none."

"But, oh! shield your dear self from harm. Take his advice, my good king, for he is wise in counsel, and faithful to you."

"But I have given my word, and my father must have an interview. What is once said it were not kingly to unsay."

"Let him approach, then, as a slave approaches his master. There were less danger in that. So says Nizám, and he is never mistaken in these matters."

Keikobád had rejected the same suggestion when it came from his minister direct, but now he had no resolution to repel it. Zumániá's tears prevailed, and Bakarrá Khán was ordered to approach his sovereign performing all the humiliating services rendered by governors in disgrace.

It was a sore trial for an affectionate parent to go through, but the ordeal was passed with heroic fortitude. At the last scene, however, when the father stood in humble attitude before his son seated on a throne, the eyes of the stern warrior, though unused to the melting mood, could restrain their tears no longer. Natural feelings had still a place in the heart of the dissipated Keikobád. He could not see his weeping parent unmoved, and, descending from his throne, ran to throw himself at

his feet. The whole court was in tears, and the abashed Nizámudeen precipitately fled from the presence.

Good people congratulated themselves that a reform of the court was now inevitable, and evil men anticipated with fear a termination of their influence. But the wily Nizám was more intimately acquainted with his master's heart, and conscious of his great power. His influence was based on the vices of the young emperor, and nothing he knew could subvert such well-founded authority.

Nizám knew the foibles of his master. In the camp of Bakarrá Khán was a Hindu orphan girl, betrothed to a young Rájput soldier. She was exceedingly handsome, and Bakarrá Khán, to whose care her father had committed her on his death-bed, regarded her with great tenderness and affection. Her name was Mookta Bye. Flattering accounts of her beauty were brought to Keikobád by his designing minister, and the diseased mind of the king readily caught the bait. His passions were roused, and plans were instantly set on foot to gratify them. But Bakarrá Khán was an old soldier, and not to be easily outdone in tactics. Repeated failures deeply chagrined his son; while the wily Nizám, pleased at finding his victim entangled in his toils, excited his suspicions further by suggesting the extreme probability of Bakarrá's being, or wishing to be, more intimately connected with the girl than was generally known. This once more created an ill-feeling between father and son. Bakarrá Khán began to be disgusted with Keikobád's meanness of mind, and Keikobád could not brook to be thwarted in the pursuit of his pleasures even by a father. Such was the state of affairs when one morning even Bakarrá Khán's vigilance was defeated by the cunning minister.

A beautiful Hindu girl was seen bathing at dawn in the clear waters of the Jumná. The stream stood up to her shoulders, so that her face, neck, and hair were only visible to bystanders. It was a face to fire even the heart of an anchorite; and her eyes were large, black, and

gentle as a dove's. While she was yet performing her lustrations, a small party of soldiers happened to pass that way. All eyes were at once turned upon her as to a focus of attraction, and so absorbing was the interest every one felt for her that for some time no remarks were interchanged. To see herself thus gazed at was not very comfortable to a young and modest maiden. The blood coursed her cheeks to and fro, but her confusion only heightened her charms.

"By Mahomet's heaven and his *houris*!" said Nizám, for he himself was at the head of the party, "this must be the celebrated Mookta Bye herself. I am certain we have given the old fox the slip at last. Now, comrades, secure your prize."

The maiden wept, prayed, and struggled; but she was captured in spite of her prayers and tears, and conducted to the royal *hárem*. The young emperor was in raptures. In vain Mookta tore her hair and raved; the heart of Keikobád was not to be moved. In vain Bakarrá Khán hastened to rescue her; the doors of the palace were no longer open to the father of the emperor. The maiden's doom was sealed.

Bakarrá Khán foamed with rage at the wanton disrespect shown to him. He even thought of revenge. But cooler deliberations forced themselves on the old soldier. To resort to force were at best but a desperate undertaking, and would not remedy the violence done. The girl was unmarried, and, if Keikobád would only love her as she deserved, she was not ill-provided for. Her alliance with a Mussulman *he* could not consider disgraceful. That he was insulted in her unceremonious and unjustifiable capture was but too true; but could he go to war for it with a son? "I will leave him to his fate," said the deliberate soldier; and he quietly returned to

Freed from the presence of an unwelcome parent, Keikobád plunged anew into all sorts of "debauchery. For a while Mookta Bye engrossed his whole affection;

but other sirens in succession usurped the place where she had reigned; and they in turn gave way to newer favourites. Thus time jogged on with Keikobád amidst a variety of pleasures. The cares of government and the exercise of all substantial authority were exclusively committed to Nizám, who missed no opportunity to entangle his puppet more completely in his snare. A set of boon companions, selected from the dregs of society, encompassed the king; and at the head of this goodly band Nizám placed one of his own most devoted creatures, well-qualified to second his views, and to carry out his designs. This was a new servitor, picked up under rather striking circumstances. He was a Rájput, and had been for some time a candidate for employment; but Nizám had hitherto found no especial cause to notice him. It was at a chase, when they had started a noble stag in one of the royal forests, which threatened to outstrip all his pursuers, that he was first singled out. "You there, you that would enter our service," said Nizám, "there goes the stately buck with the dogs at his heels. Bring him to me and you get a place." The Rájput followed the deer after all the rest had fallen back—braved him at bay, and having killed him, brought the body to the minister, and obtained a post. Nizám soon found his services to be of great value. He assisted in all his plots and conspiracies—in making and marring, in mining and undermining, in fact in everything that was difficult or desperate; and he gradually so ingratiated himself into his confidence that he became privy to all his designs.

This new-comer was introduced to the king just when Keikobád was in want of such a companion to add zest to his pleasures, and he was welcomed with open arms. He could sing and drink; tell good tales and pass better jokes; and as for his diplomacy, he understood a love-plot before it was all told, and there was not a better hand in the kingdom for carrying it out. The confidence of Keikobád he won as rapidly as he had

done that of Nizám; and he determined to avail himself of both.

"You are a rare chap," said the king, one day to him, when he had finished the narration of a clever trick he had once played on an uxorious inn-keeper, "you are a rare chap, for a Hindu. But it is a pity you are in Nizám's service and not in mine."

"My lord, Nizám himself is in your majesty's service."

"Ay, so he is; but I wish, nevertheless, you were mine directly, and not through him."

"Your will is law, my king. Nizám shall no longer reckon me among his servitors, since such is your pleasure."

"But you don't come over with a willing heart, do you? You needn't change masters if you don't change your fidelity."

"Take off my head, my lord, when you doubt my truth. But suspect not on slight grounds."

"No, that I will not. You shall have my trust. I have an important commission for you; something more dangerous though than cozening an old cuckold of an inn-keeper."

"Never mind the danger, my liege. Danger is spice to an adventure. I shall like your commission the better for the danger's sake."

"Here, friend, is a purse of gold for thee," said Keikobád, as he tossed it over to the reckless adventurer. "It is an earnest of future rewards. Be true to me and my bounty shall know no limits."

"But your majesty has not yet named my work."

Keikobád looked around, to assure himself that there were no spies or eaves-droppers at hand; then with a tremulous voice said, "Nizámudeen must die!"

"He shall die then," returned the Rájput, with cool indifference, pocketing the earnest-money he had received; "but how? by poison or by steel?"

"By poison," answered the king; "the dagger cannot always be used with safety."

The Rájpoor bowed till the edge of his turban touched the ground, and left the apartment.

For a long time Keikobád remained in great suspense; for he dreaded the treachery of his agent and the discovery of his design. But his suspicions were unfounded.

The Rájpoor was true to his promise, and the minister's death was in due time reported by his family to the king. It had occurred under very suspicious circumstances. A potent poison was discovered in the dregs of his cup, so destructive in its nature that, where drops of the draught had fallen, it had consumed the counterpane of his couch and blackened the table. But the crime was not brought home to any particular person, and of course, remained unavenged.

It must not, however, be supposed that the deceased died in ignorance of his murderer. Nizám was reclining on a sofa in his closet. On a stool beside him sat his Rájpoor favourite; and a cup of the minister's beloved *sherbet* stood invitingly on a little circular table before him. They were speaking of wine and women, and cracking the newest jokes. Nizám extended his hand towards the inviting tumbler. The Rájpoor, ever officious, rose and reached it to him. But he had hardly gulped a mouthful than he threw out the remainder with horror. He felt a strong burning sensation in his mouth and throat, totally irreconcilable with the nature of his usual drink. The truth at once flashed into his suspicious mind. "Roar for assistance," said he to the Rájpoor, "I am poisoned. Help! help!" But the Rájpoor neither stirred nor spoke. He only gazed on his victim with a fixed and piercing look. The poison was of a very potent nature. Its effect was instantaneous, and before his own efforts could alarm his family, Nizámudeen was a corpse. With his dying breath, however, he had accosted his murderer.

"Monster, did I feed thee for this? At whose instigation hast thou acted thus?"

"The king's and my own!" answered the adventurer firmly.

"But wherefore thine? Speak slave, what wrong hast thou received from me?"

"Hear then: I am Rámdeo Thákoor. Who forced Mookta Bye into the Mogul's *hárem*?"

Nizám turned on his couch, and died with a groan.

Great was the pleasure of Keikobád when he found himself liberated from the influence of a minister who had become disagreeable to him. He pursued his excesses with unabated zest. Nizám was never missed. His place as a counsellor, pander, and parasite was supplied by others; and no difficulty of any sort was felt on account of his loss. To the Rájpoor the king became a kind master, and he found his kindness repaid by the most endearing attentions. Time jogged on. His subjects were disgusted with his misrule, but he cared little for their opinion. Cabals were formed for undermining his authority, but he was ignorant of them, or thought that he had struck at their root by the murder of Nizám. He was accordingly indifferent, dead to everything but his pleasures. But this state of things could not last longer.

It was a dark, dreary night; and the rain was pattering hard. Keikobád was lying sick in bed, in his castle at Kolookery, on the banks of the Jumná, attended only by a female slave, when hurried footsteps were heard on the stairs, and immediately after the door of the apartment was violently flung open. The king was in the delirium of a strong fever, and almost unconscious of his situation. Around him pressed a body of fierce ruffians. The slave fled shrieking from the apartment; and the emperor awakening from his torpor endeavoured to rise. But the murderers now assailed him with clubs and bludgeons; and foremost amongst them was the Rájpoor, who with one stroke beat out his brains. Ere this stroke, however, was dealt, the king had perceived him.

"Thou too?" asked Keikobád, looking steadfastly in

his face. "Wretch! what have I done to thee to merit this?"

"It was thou, base libertine," answered the ruffian, "that ravished my betrothed bride; and thus does Rámdeo Thákoor requite thee." He seconded his words with a blow that at once bereaved Keikobád of life.

They rolled him up in the bed-clothes, and flung him out of the window into the river.

THE JUSTICE OF PROVIDENCE.

It was the first anniversary of the reign of Álláudeen Khilji. The streets of Delhi were thronged with spectators; for the young king, with his principal favourites and officers of state, was to pass through the city in superb procession, that all his loving subjects might have an opportunity of paying public homage to his worth. The windows and roofs of the houses were also almost as crowded as the streets; and from turret and balcony bright eyes looked down in expectation of the sight.

A fat village wench, who had never been in the imperial city before, and had never seen such a rare show, had taken her seat on a block of stone in the corner of a street; and beside her stood a stern, gaunt, and sinewy old labourer, with whom she was evidently somehow connected, perhaps, more intimately than either cared to avow. They were tittering, and giggling, and cracking stale jests between themselves, when, lo! there was a flourish of trumpets, all fell on their knees, and a brilliant cavalcade passed on.

"Now tell me," said the lubberly woman, when the procession was out of sight, "which of them was the king, for in the front row were three persons, each of whom for his dress might deserve to be so called."

"The one in the middle was the emperor," answered

her cavalier servante ; " and he is as dashing and reckless a warrior as any in the world."

" And the other two ?"

" Why his great favourites—how I should like to be a favourite myself ! There's no telling but it may come to pass."

" Ay," answered the woman drily, " if there be a way to it through the gallows. Dame Fortune and thou might be friends on such terms, I guess. But—"

" Friends on such terms !" retorted the labourer ; " why Fortune and I had been friends a long while but for thee. Thou art become so handsome of late that the old lady has become jealous."

" Hoot, man !" answered the woman, " leave your stale jokes and tell me who those twain favourites are, and how they have risen."

" That were a long story, dear, to tell," said the labourer, " and one that does not concern you or me ; so you had better pack up your curiosity in the best way you can."

" Their names, their names ; I must at least have their names," insisted the bulky daughter of Eve.

" Why, Achtiâr Hoor, and Máhmood—Máhmood, the son of Sâlim," answered her lover. " There is nothing peculiar in their names."

A deep-drawn sigh from the balcony above arrested their conversation ; and, almost immediately after, a footman opening the street-door requested the speakers to move off, and select some other place for their conversation.

We must now turn to the inmates of the balcony.

" How hard it is to believe that there is a God," said the still beautiful and amiable widow of the late emperor Jelâludeen, wiping her swollen eyes ; " for if the great God liveth, wherefore do the good suffer and the guilty triumph in their wickedness ?"

" Speak not so, my dearest," expostulated her mother, an aged woman who sat by her side ; " deny not the Prophet's God even with thy tongue, and accuse not the

inscrutable wisdom of Providence. Let not grief allure thee to impiety. The God of Islám weighs justice with an even scale. If the good suffer in a short life, the wicked suffer after death for ever."

The widow gave no answer; but the tears flowed profusely from her eyes, and she groaned in bitterness of spirit.

Jeláludeen Khiliji was the most humane sovereign that ever sat upon the throne of Delhi, though he was supposed to have risen to it by the murder of Keikobád. His lenity was so great that the worst criminals were often allowed to pass unpunished; and as for those who offended against his person, they were never so much as brought to account for their misconduct. His simplicity of manners was particularly remarkable; and no man who knew him could regard with aught but the most devoted attachment the kind, convivial gentleman, who as a friend never remembered that he was a king. Jeláludeen had a nephew, whom he loved with all the affection of a father. He had brought up this child from his infancy with special care; and as a warrior and a statesman Álláudeen had few equals in the age. But Állá was ambitious; and to this monster passion his kind, confiding uncle fell a victim. Achtiár Hoor and Máhmood were his murderers.

It was on this account that the mention of those names forced a deep sigh from the affectionate Málleká Jehán, and brought to her lips the atheistic sentence recorded above. But the sentiment was only on the lips of the amiable widow. Her heart could afford room to no such idea; and she submitted to her mother's rebuke because she felt the justice of it.

Five years after this incident Málleká Jehán and her mother were one morning looking out on the street from the same balcony. There was a sadness still in the appearance of the widow, which spoke eloquently of her heart's bereavement; but time and habitual self-restraint had mellowed it to what common observers might regard

as mere paleness of countenance. Her mother was in the very decline of life, and one well-prepared to depart from it in peace. They were speaking to each other, but what the nature of their conversation was we know not. Possibly it had reference to the widow's condition; for the old woman was ever fond of soothing with kind words the poignancy of her child's affliction. Suddenly a hue and cry arose in the streets, and, a moment after, they saw a wild maniac rush past their house, shrieking aloud, "Save me—save me! he comes to avenge!" The mob followed at his heels, pointing at him the finger of scorn, and crying, "There goes Achtiár Hoor, the murderer!" The tears gushed afresh from the eyes of the widow. "The great God liveth," said she; "for the good never pass unavenged;" and, choked with the tumultuous tide of her feelings, she sank exhausted on her mother's breast.

The efforts of her fond parent recalled the widow to herself. They still occupied their places in the balcony. A feeling of gratitude for the just dispensations of Providence now entirely occupied that mind where of late years a distrust in the Almighty had been attempting to creep in. Málleká Jehán sat motionless and in silence, and, pleased to find that it was not the silence of misery, her mother ventured not to disturb her thoughts. But there was again a hue and a cry in the crowded street beneath. "Room for the leper—make room—make room!" was bawled out from all directions. The eyes of Málleká Jehán fell on the miserable object of general aversion. It was a pitiful case. The disease had in many places so dissolved the flesh that the bones themselves were visible. All in the crowded street avoided the unfortunate man; while the rabble, in answer to the question of passing strangers, hooted aloud, "This is Mahmood, the son of Sálím." Málleká Jehán arose from her seat, and retired to her innermost apartment. The fate of the assassins had fully vindicated the justice of Providence in her mind.

PUDMANI; THE FAIR ONE OF CHEETORE.

PUDMANI, the fair daughter of Hámir Chohán, was in the maturity of womanhood when the Emperor Álláudeen was at the summit of his greatness. She was the wife of Bheemsi, the Lord-Protector of Mewár during the minority of Lákumsi; and the fame of her beauty extended beyond the confines of Rájwárrá. Many were the rival princes who had sought her hand, but Bheemsi was the choice of her virgin heart; and Hymen never bound two more loving souls together than those of the Lord-Protector and his bride.

The Emperor Álláudeen was now in the height of his glory. He had won the glorious title of the "great subjugator of all India;" and a hundred vassal-princes stood before him when he took his seat on the divan. But, so insatiable is the human mind, the imperial Páthán, surrounded by every comfort, convenience, and luxury, sighed on the throne of Delhi for the love of Pudmani, the fair one of Cheetore. This was his thought by day and his dream by night; and he languished under his perverse malady in the midst of affluence and splendour which the greatest potentates of the earth might have envied.

The *ameer-al-omráh* was the bosom friend of his sovereign, but even he for sometime knew not what disease was preying on his master's health. Disappointed love, however, was too great a torment to be long concealed, and the emperor was soon glad enough to make his anxious minister his confidant. At first the old *omráh* tried to argue him out of his passion; but in this he did not succeed. "Let me see her but once," said the emperor, "and then I will willingly crush my passion for ever." At this his grey-headed adviser smiled, and doubtingly shook his head; but he felt for his sovereign, who he saw was deeply smitten, and determined to feed his flame.

At the advice of the *ameer-al-omráh* a war was undertaken to soothe the royal mind; and before many months

were over, Álláudeen, at the head of a large army, approached the well-guarded fortress of Cheetore. He besieged the place promptly, but it was stoutly defended by the garrison within; and though the Mogul army succeeded in ravaging the country around, they made very little impression on the ancient bulwarks before them, while the vigorous sallies made by the besieged told more decidedly against the assailants. The slow progress of the siege at last made Álláudeen impatient; and, wearied with painful vigilance, and harassed by frequent assaults, he finally resolved to abandon it. Word was accordingly sent to the Lord-Protector of Cheetore, that the siege would be raised, but that before departing from the country the emperor would wish to pay him a visit.

This mark of friendliness was reciprocated by Bheemsi with great pleasure and cordiality. A pavilion was immediately erected outside the fort for the emperor's reception; and, to please him the better, Pudmani was brought out in a covered litter to grace the reconciliation with her presence. Álláudeen acknowledged the honour done to him with thanks; but, like a certain personage well-known in connection with a common proverb, this only encouraged him to ask for further concessions. "Could we not see her?" said the enamoured emperor; "could we not be permitted to gaze for a moment upon those extraordinary charms which have gained her the surname of the Peri of Paradise? We would be content to look at her through the medium of mirrors, if custom forbids our seeing her face to face." Bheemsi was pleased with the compliment, for he was by no means insensible to flattery; and he not only forgave the unreasonableness of the request, but complied with it. The mirrors were soon brought and arranged; and, when Pudmani descended from her litter, Álláudeen gazed rapturously at the image before him of the glass; and he returned to his camp a greater victim to his passion than he left it. . . .

Hostilities being now at an end, courtesy demanded that Bheemsi should return the emperor's visit; and the

Rájput, unwilling to be outdone in confidence, entered the Mahomedan encampment accompanied only by a few of his personal attendants. He soon found, however, that his confidence was misplaced. The faithless Páthán, advised by his wily minister, captured him the moment he found him in his power, and triumphantly carried him to Delhi, refusing to liberate him except on the unconditional surrender of his wife.

The agony of grief denies even the relief of tears, and Pudmani heard of the detention of her husband with an unwatered eye. In a few days a great change came over her; her lovely face lost all its destructive charms, her eyes became lustreless, and her cheeks were wan and pale. Those who knew how well she loved her husband looked upon her condition with compassion. Nor did they regret her private bereavement alone. Despair reigned throughout Cheetore, for, while Rájput honour forbade the surrender that was demanded by the emperor, the loss of Bheemsi was deeply felt, as there was no one to replace him in the post he had filled. About a week after, having sufficiently recovered from the shock she had received, Pudmani summoned to her presence a faithful servant, and ordered him to carry her *rákhi*, or bracelet, to Bádul, her cousin, the son of Goráh, a prince of Ceylon, and to communicate to him the circumstances under which she required his aid. Bádul was a stripling of about her own age, that is just out of his teens; but his name was already enrolled among the great reapers of the harvest of battle. He was a youthful prodigy, and fond of daring and desperate enterprises; but he had a warm heart also, which felt for none more warmly than for Pudmani, the favourite playmate of his childhood. When he received her token, he was prosecuting his father's wars against some neighbouring princes. These he at once hastily brought to an end, and, sending his fair cousin a corset of gold in acceptance of her pledge, shortly after announced his arrival to her aid in person, his father following at the head of a small but disciplined army.

* * * * *

It was after an arduous day's work, while Álláudeen, stretched on his pallet, was pondering on the best means of capturing the beauty of Cheestore, that the arrival of a messenger from her was announced. "Send him up immediately," said the emperor, whose anxiety was raised to the highest pitch; and the intelligence he received was balm to his tortured mind. Pudmani had at last consented to his own terms, and was prepared to place herself in his power, provided her husband was instantly liberated; and truly glad was Álláudeen on receiving the joyful tidings. He loaded her envoy with presents and compliments, but would not permit him to tarry in his court.

"Go home, my friend," said he, "go back in haste, and bring over the fair one to our eager arms, and the presents thou wilt then receive will far exceed those I give thee at present."

Goaráh—for it was none other—thanked the emperor for his liberality, and said he was quite ready to return, and only waited to know how the fair one should be escorted. "Her females and handmaids are numerous, as becomes her high station, and many others are desirous of paying their last mark of attention by attending on her to Delhi. Will the emperor consider it safe to permit—"

"Safe to permit!" exclaimed the emperor, cutting short his request; "yes, I will consider it safe to permit all the pretty dames of Rájwárrá to enter my *hárem*. Let Pudmani come attended as she likes best, and as befits an empress of Delhi, and I will issue strict orders that the whole party be received at every station with imperial honours."

"Well, my liege, and to guard her and her suite from the curiosity and insolence of your majesty's soldiers, will it not be desirable for us to send a small retinue of armed men in her train?"

"No, no!" replied the wary king; "we don't permit that. I like not an enemy's forces in the heart of my empire. Take my assurance that no soldier of mine shall dare to violate the sanctity of female decorum and privacy,

or disobey my commands. Send your women in as close litters as you choose, and I assure you, when they return they will return with as much virtue as they may bring."

The emperor smiled a mischievous smile, and looked up to the Rájput's face; but he there encountered a frown that compelled him to avert his gaze. Goráh, however, instantly resumed his easy behaviour, bowed low to the imperial Páthán, and departed.

A joyous time it was for Delhi, and great were the preparations made by its loyal inhabitants for suitably receiving the fair one of Cheetore when the day for doing so arrived. The weather was bright and beautiful, and banners and streamers inwove with silver and gold decorated the streets on all sides. Then there were trumpets and cymbals sounding, and nautch-girls singing at convenient distances. And when the procession of litters came, crowds of spectators cheered it as it winded through the streets. The litters were nearly seven hundred in number, each borne by six porters, and conveying one or more Rájputnis within; so that nearly five thousand souls were thus suddenly transported from Mewár into the heart of the Mogul empire; and very much pleased was Álláudeen at this exhibition of confidence and courtesy. Goráh now came forward to claim his reward and the liberty of Bheemsi. But the emperor shook his head, and said, "Not the latter yet, my friend. Bheemsi shall be liberated after I am married to his wife; till then let the gold I shall give thee keep thee in humour."

Goráh's face was slightly overcast, but, instantly recovering his equanimity, he observed, "Pudmani requests only a last interview with her husband, and then she is yours for ever. Order the marriage as soon as you choose, and after it is over, allow us to return to our country with our prince."

Álláudeen smiled. "Pudmani's whim shall be indulged; but an injured husband is too dangerous a foe to be set free in haste. We must think over that matter twice before we do anything;" then, without waiting for an

answer, he turned round to one of his officers, and bade Bheemsi to be brought before him.

The Lord-Protector of Cheetore was conducted to the presence of his captor loaded with irons. But, having attained his object, Állá was no longer disposed to be cruel, and the chains of his prisoner were ordered to be struck off.

"I need not ask to what circumstance I owe this indulgence," said Bheemsi, "for I have heard all in my prison;" then, straining his eyes to distinguish clearly the features of Goráh, now much changed since they had seen each other last, he added, "Surely it will not be misusing my liberty to kill that false slave;" and he rushed upon Goráh and took him by the throat. Quite maddened by the intelligence that Pudmani had agreed to share the Tártár's bed to procure his liberation, he was impatient to avenge his wounded honour on her chief adviser, as he understood Goráh to have been, and he held his throat so strongly that it would have suffocated any other man to death.

"Old dastard! stain of thy race! thou hast brought down the Seesodiá name, thou hast covered us all with shame; and thus, villain, I requite thee:" and he endeavoured to fling him down before him.

But Goráh was a strong and muscular man, though in the decline of life, and freed himself easily from Bheemsi's frantic grasp, while he said to him in a low whisper, "Mistake me not, Bheemsi; remember old days, and that Goráh is as much a Rájput as thou art." Their eyes met, and a volume of thoughts was interchanged.

The Rájput women had been received in rich pavilions erected near the emperor's palace, and thither Bheemsi was conducted to see his wife for the last time. Álláúdeen offered to hear him company; but Goráh reminded the emperor that Pudmani had solicited a private meeting with her husband, which was to be her last interview with him on earth; and the impatient Mogul was content to await at the door of the pavilion, ready to go in as soon

as Bheemsi should come out. The Lord-Protector's stay with his wife, however, appeared to him to be much too long. He began to be jealous; and, unable to wait further, he suddenly burst into the apartment. Great was his surprise when, instead of finding there the fairest of her race, he saw Bheemsi conversing with a youthful warrior of gigantic proportions and fully accoutred for the field. "Treachery!" shouted the emperor of the Moguls, and his domestic guards rushed in in numbers. The confusion that ensued may be imagined. Taken unawares, but not unprepared, Goráh was not behind-hand in carrying out his scheme. "Down with the infidels!" roared Bádul, and the flower of Mewár chivalry crowded around him. Every litter had brought thither a young Rájput chief, and the litter porters, when they dropt their disguise, revealed that they were trained to nobler occupations than what they had professed. Bádul, who had represented Pudmani, pounced upon Álláudeen like a tiger; and the throne of Delhi would have become vacant if the royal guards had not been more careful than their king. They received manfully the strokes dealt by the young giant; and the sacrifice of five lives saved that of the emperor, who was borne away half-suffocated and severely wounded. The emperor's party rapidly gaining in numbers, the Rájputs sounded their retreat; and in spite of the strength and number of the forces which were soon brought against them, and the many difficulties they had to encounter in an enemy's country, they succeeded in cutting a way for Bheemsi to fly, and covered his retreat with their lives.

THE CAPTURE OF JABOOÁH.

THE atrocities of Suká Náigue, the Bheel rájáh of Jabooáh, perpetrated in conjunction with Chunderbhán, the Rájput chief of Dolitáh, at one time attained such

historic notoriety as to arrest the attention of the court of Delhi. The Emperor Álláudeen was so incensed at the disrespect shown to his authority, that a *firmán* under the royal seal was issued, stripping the robbers of their rights and possessions, and declaring their lives forfeited to the state; and Kissen Dás, a distinguished general, who had recently succeeded in quelling an insurrection in Dáccá, was ordered by his sovereign to carry out the imperial decree.

Strong in his inaccessible fastnesses the rájáh of Jabooáh had long defied all regular attacks, and enjoyed his wanton pleasures with undisturbed serenity. Neither justice nor vengeance had ever succeeded to pursue him thither; and in his own craggy nest he lived with the proverbial carelessness of a freebooter, and the licentiousness of a voluptuary. An adept in all sorts of dissipation he was strongly addicted to wine; and his fancy for the sex was so excessive that his maligners at court often remarked to one another, in significant whispers, that the zenáná of Suká Náigue contained a greater number of fair women than even the imperial *hárem*. Some people say that it was this arrogation of an exclusively royal prerogative that principally caused his loyalty to be suspected, and brought on a visitation of the emperor's wrath. But, however that may be, the fact was notorious that many fair captives, wrenched from their paternal hearths, sighed away their lives within the mountain-fastnesses of Jabooáh, as slaves or concubines of the robber-chief.

One of this unhappy sisterhood was Illá, the daughter of a Rájpoot soldier, a young maiden of extraordinary beauty, and hitherto the sole prop of her aged father. She, with some others, had recently been surprised and brought off from their native village-green, while pursuing innocent diversions by moonlight. The song was growing sweeter, and the dance waxing warmer, when their mirth was suddenly interrupted by a body of armed Bheels, who broke into the midst of them, and, seizing hold of the

youngest and the fairest, dragged them away unmindful of their shrieks and prayers. The scheme had been so well-laid that some days elapsed before any trace of the lost ones was discovered by their friends; but, the notorious character of Suká Náigue offering a clue to their suspicions, the atrocity was at last, to their conviction at least, fully brought home to him. Deep was the grief and indignation of the relatives of the parties abducted at this discovery, and within the domestic circle many an anxious heart thought of revenge; but, so great was the terror allied with Suká's name, that few ventured to give vent to their thoughts. Bitterly was the loss of the fair ones lamented: and the father of Illá in particular felt keenly for his only child, and cursed the shameless profligate who had stolen her from his heart.

The old soldier bit his lips, and could hardly suppress the transports of indignant revenge which boiled within him in spite of his years. He shuddered when he thought of his own beautiful Illá—the image of her departed mother—as the captive of an unprincipled ruffian, perhaps violated and dishonoured in her flower of youth; and, in the paroxysm of rage, he would at times gird himself with his old rusty sword, the faithful companion of many a victorious excursion, and arouse himself to avenge her wrongs. But he was poor and friendless, and the heyday of life had long gone by. Alone he could not cope with his powerful antagonist; and he would smite his breast and throw himself on the ground cursing his impotence, and for hours lie buried in thoughts of agony or rave like one distracted. At last he heard that Suká wanted money, and that a certain Mussulman had ransomed his daughters for a stated sum. The Rájpoor was poor, but on receiving this intelligence he sold his all to get back his child.

A man with a full purse was ever a welcome visitant at the castle of Jabooáh. The sentinel stopped his measured tread at the approach of the old, heavy-laden soldier, the massive iron gate was flung ajar, and the court-yard was

in an uproar of rejoicing while he was hurried through the bustling crowd to the presence of their chief. Arrived there the Rájput declared who he was, and on what errand he was come; and as he concluded his appeal and prayer for the release of his only child, the tears burst from his eyes. Suká regarded him for a moment with a dark and searching look, and then haughtily bade him to count out his gold. Piece after piece was exposed before the glistening eyes of the robber, who, when the last had left its master's purse, ordered him to depart. The Rájput pleaded, appealed to justice and generosity, raved for his poor daughter, and on his knees beseeched the unfeeling barbarian to restore her.

"Not yet, not yet," said the bandit, with a sinister smile; "she goes not as she came. Some other time thou may'st have her back, old fool;" and the groaning father was forcibly ejected from the castle.

Expelled from Jabooáh with violence the bereaved father never returned to his solitary home. Many were the kind inquiries made after him by his neighbours, but Conrad still came not, and they naturally concluded that he had fallen a victim to his temerity within the robber's hold: and as days and weeks passed away his fate and his misfortunes began gradually to be forgotten.

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It was a fine summer evening, and the young moon was shining beautifully over the antique turrets of Jabooáh, when Illá opened the casement of her window. Her face was pensive, and a big tear glistened on the fringe of her dark eye-lashes. She looked on the mountains bathed in the pure moonlight, and on the sparkling rivulet that glided by their feet, but turned away her eyes from both as if they lacked sympathy with the emotions of her heart.

"Alas! my father!" she exclaimed, and wept bitterly as she spoke to herself, "alas! what are my griefs to thine. Oh God! will these eyes ever rest on his venerable countenance again?"

While thus lamenting, her look was directed towards

the abrupt and precipitous hills over which the castle stood, when lo ! she saw the apparition of a man scrambling over them with superhuman steadiness. Her first emotions were those of terror and alarm. The same sight had been seen regularly for a week by others of the castle, and all had concurred in opinion that it was either an actual demon, or one in league with the powers of darkness. Some went so far as to assert that, as the night advanced, the apparition dilated in size, and that in that mystic hour when the bell tolled one, it was always to be seen with a blazing rafter in one hand and a horn in the other ; while others affirmed that a large black dog, with curled, shaggy hair,—perhaps the devil himself in disguise,—was to be seen in its company, always preceding it, as if showing it the way. But the purpose of its nocturnal ramblings none had yet attempted to explain, for who can dive into the purposes of the devil ? For the first two nights the castle-gates had been locked with more than usual care, and the watch forbidden to drink spirituous liquors ; but these precautions were subsequently considered unnecessary, first, because they seemed to be uncalled for, as there could be no cause of hostility between the devil and the garrison, and, secondly, because it had been made apparent by the explanations of a learned priest that they must be ineffectual to keep him out, should any such cause have arisen.

Illá's first emotions were those of terror and alarm. But what had she to fear ? She could not conceive a more horrible fate than that which awaited her in the castle. Hell was yawning at her feet, and every moment threatened to drag her into the lowest sink of shame. Evil men, worse than the vilest spirits, celebrated their unblest orgies day and night in that unholy mansion ; and Illá, as she thought of them, chased all superstitious terrors from her heart.

• “Whoever he be, demon or murderer, I care not,” exclaimed the maiden to herself, “and here will I wait to bid him welcome, if he can bring me deliverance.”

The figure had now gained the foot of the castle, and Illá observed him stoop to the ground and lay his ear to it for some seconds. He then arose as if satisfied that all was right, and from a little thicket of furze, which lay hard by, drew out a scaling ladder which had been there concealed, and applied it to Illá's balcony. All fears of the maiden had now vanished. The light of the moon was not sufficiently strong to enable her to distinguish the features of the adventurer; but she at once understood his object, and dropped her scarf to him in acknowledgment. The daring cavalier only laid his forefinger across his lips, and began to ascend the ladder. But who was he—who could he be? Illá gazed as if her soul were about to start out of her eyes. Was she to believe her senses, or was she dreaming, or was she mad?

"Father!" exclaimed the astonished maiden, as he stood before her on the balcony, "art thou my father?"

"Hush!" said the old man, "speak low, or you will alarm the castle;" and he threw his arms around her neck and wept. The momentary weakness, however, was immediately mastered.

"There is no time to lose," said the father to his still-clinging daughter. "I have been anxiously awaiting this opportunity to meet thee, for days. On an important errand I am come, and I must go back with speed to my expecting friends."

"And leave me behind to my fate, father?"

"Hush! Illá, hush! I must leave thee for the present. How can I carry thee over these rocks?"

"Then dash me on them if you cannot take me away. But leave me not here to—"

"Patience, my child, have patience, or you will mar all. Vengeance is abroad, and the moments of Suká Náigae are numbered. Thou need'st not despair, for I will come again."

"But the perils of this adventure, father—"

"Speak not of them. When did a father think of perils while bent on rescuing his child? But tell me,

Illá, and speak sooth, art thou the robber's now, or mine ? ”

“ Thine only. How could you doubt it, father ? ”

“ And as pure as ever ? ”

Illá drew out a knife which she had kept concealed within the folds of her dress. “ As this blade is unstained, father, so pure is thy daughter still. Had she been polluted, this would have been stained with gore.”

The old man replied not, but pressed her closer to his heart.

“ One word more, Illá. Next night I'll come again, but not alone ; and thy casement must afford us entrance into the castle. Till then this secret must not pass.”

“ Not if it costs me my life.”

“ Enough ! there is much work in hand ! I must away.”

Calmly the old man descended the ladder, and carefully did he hide it in the underwood of furze ; and, as he turned toward the rocks, Illá knelt and prayed to Heaven.

The castle of Jabooáh was a very old and odd building, and yet was not deficient in an appearance of strength and massiveness. As a stronghold of thieves and robbers it had played its part well, and defied foul weather in the most stirring times. It had also resounded to shouts of revelry and licentiousness. Suká Náigue was a daring freebooter ; but what was lightly got was also lightly spent, and the cup went freely round in his hall. If his name was a terror to his enemies, his friends found in it wherewith to satisfy their debauchery ; and he had at all times a daring set of companions at his elbows. The *firmán* of the emperor, of which he had recently heard, declared his adherents traitors ; but he did not miss a single face for all that, as the impotency of royal *firmáns* was even then proverbial.

“ Khosál Pánday, what do you think of this royal *firmán*, and of this Kissen Dás, who they say is coming against me ? ” asked Suká of one of his adherents.

"The former a piece of waste paper, and the latter a fool," briefly answered the chief addressed, sipping a fresh draught from the nearest tankard.

"But, nevertheless, some care must be taken to keep him off, for he comes well-backed who comes backed with a royal order. Would it not be wise to tell Báhádóor Khán to watch the defiles, that no suspicious persons may pass in without strict search and examination?"

"Ay, as you please, and it would be a nice sort of work too. But you don't say what beggar's brat is to be suspected and stopped, and which allowed to pass free."

"Why, I would stop armed men by all means, and men on horseback."

"Men on horseback! A hundred men or upwards have entered on horseback but yesterday."

"How, why was I not told of this before?" angrily demanded the chief, suddenly assuming a stern tone of command.

"Because they were only horse-dealers from Guzerát, my lord," answered Khosál Pánday, simpering all the while.

"Oh, you incorrigible punster!" exclaimed Suká, relieved of his terrors, and relaxing his high tone. "But have they good horses, did you see?"

"The best *tattoes* I've ever seen," was the laconic reply.

"Send for them straight, then. We must have them all by fair means or foul. Good horses and pretty women are only for brave chiefs."

The dealers were brought into the castle-yard, and their cattle too. Suká Náigue bargained hard; but the dealers did not dispute much about the price. They seemed anxious to dispose of their cattle at any rate, and Suká had them at his own. The appearance of the chief horse-dealer was rather singular, and elicited some remarks from the idle Bheels who had gathered around him. He was a strong, well-knit, muscular man, scarce

thirty years old, certainly not more, and had a boldness of air rather too much for his trade, and a keenness of eye before which the haughty look of the haughtiest Bheel cowered in diffidence and fear. But these particulars were unobserved by Suká, who was too well-pleased with his bargain to attend to anything else. The money was paid down, and received with equal pleasure; and the horse-dealer, to evince his gratitude more strongly, insisted that the robber-chief should partake of a cheer in his tents.

"By Mahádeo's locks! this is a rare chap," exclaimed the bandit. "Chunderbhán, what say you to the proposal?"

"Agreed, if the rascal gives us enough to drink."

The horse-dealer assured them that no care would be wanting to entertain them properly; and the invitation was accepted.

It was a merry night—in fact, they made a merry night of it. Suká and Chunderbhán drank hard; and the example of the chiefs was followed by their men with great alacrity. They converted the convivial party into a hard drinking match, and contended with each other who should drink most. The wine was excellent—none equal to it was to be had in the country for leagues around; and it was gulped down with great relish by those redoubtable knights. But the horse-dealers, one and all, seemed determined to keep their lips dry. They were often pressed to join their guests, but, on some plea or other, each excused himself; and the Bheels, busy in spouting, swaggering, reeling, and dancing somersets, insisted on nothing but filling their own tumblers. "More wine, more wine," was the only call; and the only discussion was about the excellence of the beverage supplied.

"Why," said Khosál Pánday, "if our good host would set up a wine-shop here he would make his fortune in no time."

"More wine here, more wine; I wonder where all this

good wine came from !” bawled out Báhádoor Khán, from a corner.

At last the usual excesses took place—swearing, slandering, foul language, and hard blows. One after another the knights yielded to the irresistible influence of the beverage, and measured their lengths on the floor; some of the stouter revellers only excepted, who, yet able to support themselves on their seats, still guided their cups with trembling hands to their trembling lips. The sudden blast of a horn was at this moment heard from the battlements of the castle.

“Now is our time, comrades,” said the chief horse-dealer, starting from his seat. “The Rájput is master of the castle already, and it remains for us to complete our success. Out with your weapons then, and slash these dogs soundly.”

Quick as lightning a hundred sabres leaped out of their scabbards. The Bheels were taken by surprise, and, though brave, were unable to defend themselves. Khosál Pánday attempted to rise, but in vain; Báhádoor Khán was unable to stand, and reeled with an impotent frown; Chunderbhán essayed a feeble resistance, but was cut down; and Suká shared the same fate, having lived long enough only to know that Kissen Dás was his conqueror, and that his strong, war-defying castle had been simultaneously betrayed by the obstinate Illá.

It was in the middle hour of night when an uproar arose within the castle of Jabooáh—a fearful cry of alarm. The clash of arms was heard on every side, and the foe was in all parts and master of them. The garrison unsuspecting of danger had gone to sleep, except the few who kept guard; and, these having been cut down before they could alarm their comrades, the rest awoke to a scene rather of massacre than combat. No quarter was given, for the invaders were too few in number to spare their enemies. Many were killed in their sleep, offering no resistance; and many who had awoke and armed in haste, threw down their arms and suffered themselves to

be butchered when they saw the apparition of the mountain standing on the battlements of the castle, holding a blazing rafter in one hand and a horn in the other, with a shaggy black spaniel at his side. The success of Kissen Dás was complete. Those mountain-fastnesses, which for ages had defied the most stubborn valour, yielded to him without a struggle; and ere long honour and beauty was the reward of his stratagem. From his grateful sovereign he received a grant of the territories he had conquered, and royal ensigns and high titles. But from an humbler hand he received, what was dearer to the youthful soldier, an accomplished and beautiful maiden to wife. The loves of Kissen Dás and Illá form the subject of many a song sung by the Bheels of Jabooáh.

DEWAL DEVI; THE PRINCESS OF GUZERÁT.

ONE morning a party of Mahomedan soldiers went to view the celebrated caves of Ellorú. They entered by the southern portal, a handsome gateway cut through the solid rock. In the compound to which this gave admittance stood a magnificent temple, elaborately ornamented with complex sculpture, which though much injured by time, retained traces of great beauty. Most of the representations were of heathen deities, which the followers of the Prophet were bound to regard with horror, notwithstanding their value as works of art. But those which represented warriors and battle-fields, bull-fights, and the figures of animals generally, they were not cynical enough to condemn. They viewed with wonder the works of a people whom they were habituated to regard with contempt. The massive steps, the colossal pillars, the handsome obelisks, and the gigantic figures, all carved out of the solid rock, seemed to have required the energy of preternatural powers to construct them; and,

as the visitors passed from one excavation to another to look at them, they could not suppress their admiration and wonder.

Thus observing and criticising in secret they approached a small cave, the entrance of which was nearly choked up with earth and stone. This did not prevent them from forcing their way into it; and they found the area which they entered crossed by a pool of water supplied by cascades from the heights of the mountains. A bridge was thrown over the pool, on either extremity of which were groups of beautiful figures, representing the naiads belonging to it. The soldiers were viewing these figures with intense delight, when the accidental ruffling of garments betrayed the presence of some living naiads on the spot. Two beautiful women had been gazing on the statues representing their sex with absorbing interest, when the soldiers stole in upon them unobserved. Noticing the intrusion, and finding that they had become objects of curious attention, they at once took flight, and, on being pursued, outstripped their pursuers, running through labyrinthine alleys, with which they seemed to be well-acquainted. Short was the grace the soldiers had received to observe them, but it was sufficient to give them a full view of their charms. One of them was pre-eminently beautiful; just in the fresh morning of maidenhood—verging perhaps on her fifteenth year. Her eyes were dark, wild, and timorously shy, yet brilliant as the purest gems; her lips were pulpy; her hair of the raven's hue; and her whole figure combined loveliness with majesty; while the lightness of her step bore comparison only to the elasticity of her heart. Her companion was senior to her by at least three years. She was an agreeable rather than a handsome person, finely formed and of maturer beauty. But it was plain to distinguish the mistress from the maid.

“By the Prophet's beard! this is the rarest adventure I have ever met with,” exclaimed the chief of the Mahomedan party. “But we must get another sight of

the *houris*, my boys. They are worth more than all these cold and formal goddesses."

But for another sight they toiled in vain. All the caves and temples were searched, every nook and corner gone over, every crumbling step and broken bridge attempted,—the whole day, in fact, was nearly spent in tracing them; but all to no purpose. The Bráhmans who conducted the soldiers were asked who the nymphs were; but they pretended not to know anything about them, and affected to be astonished to hear that such had entered the precincts of the cave without their knowledge. Thus conversing they came to 'Viswakarmá's *poori*,' or, as it is otherwise called, the 'blacksmith's hovel,'—a beautiful excavation. In front of it was a figure of the artist, who, the Bráhmans explained, had fabricated the whole of the works in one night of six months. It was his intention, they added, to have connected these excavations with the fortress of Deogiri, but the dawning of morning prevented the accomplishment of the design.

A sudden idea now occurred to the Mahomedan leader. "Is there then," he asked, "no direct communication with the fortress of Deogiri at present?"

"None that I am aware of," replied the Bráhman.

"But there may be some secret passage of which perhaps you are not cognizant?"

"I know every nook and corner of these caves, and I know that there is no passage of the sort you speak of. The *rájáhs* of Deogiri have always visited these caves by the common route."

"And the *ránées*?"

"They seldom come, but when they do they also come by the common road."

The Mahomedan chief said nothing in reply; but one of his men took up the thread.

"Perhaps some of the Deogiri ladies intended a visit to-day: is that impossible?"

"We are always previously advised of such intentions, and it is impossible, because we have received no notice

of the kind. Besides, while you are proceeding towards the fortress with hostile design, such ill-timed visit they know were dangerous, and they would not venture to undertake it. But why are you racking your heads with such thoughts? Think you, that if a princess were to come here she would come attended by a single female only?"

"Dence take your wily head! What makes you suppose that we are thinking of that couple now?"

"Why? Because you have been seeking for them so earnestly."

The chief drew the Bráhmaṇ aside, and slipped into his hand two pieces of burnished gold.

"Now tell us, friend, whereabouts they are."

"In full march for Deogiri, I suppose," said the satisfied Bráhmaṇ.

"Ay, I thought as much. So they are of the Deogiri family after all?"

"Not yet, but may be."

"That's rather a queer answer. But we waste time, comrades. Shall we give the beauties chase?"

"With all our hearts," answered the soldiers with a burst of applause.

"But softly, softly," interposed the Bráhmaṇ. "I have taken your gold, and must give you good advice. The princess, for so she is, is well-attended, and your pursuit of her may prove dangerous."

"Well, for the danger's sake then, we must hunt our game; no bait so good for a soldier as love enlivened with danger. On! on! for the princess of Deogiri."

"On! on!" exclaimed the whole party, and they mounted their steeds and galloped off in haste.

The hard riding of an hour brought the Moslem cavaliers alongside the lady's escort, which exceeded their number only by half-a-dozen good men; much hard-fighting followed; and at last the Hindus were dispersed. The princess now got excessively alarmed, and the ladies about her wept with affright; but seeing that their captor

approached them with great diffidence and respect, the former roused up her spirit, and, venturing to accost him, frankly revealed her name.

“I am Dewal Devi, daughter of the fugitive rájá of Guzerát. Speak, how meanest thou to treat thy prisoner?”

If the heavens had thundered at his feet from a cloudless sky, if the dead had arisen from the grave, the young man could not have been more astonished than he was on hearing this declaration. But astonishment soon gave way to other feelings. He sank on his knees before her with respect, and surrendered his sword.

“Lady, command me,” he said, “as your slave; but my orders are to escort you to Delhi.”

The erudite reader, perhaps, does not require to be told that, among the many female favourites in the Emperor Álláudeon’s *hárem*, none so completely swayed his imperial heart as Cumlá Devi, the wife of Kurru Rái, the ex-rájá of Guzerát. Her beauty, talents, and accomplishments had all combined to gain for her the undivided affection of her Mahomedan lover; and she shone in the best and most splendid apartments of the zenáná with all the splendour of eastern magnificence. The loves and memorials of the past, the remembrance of a once affectionate husband, were almost altogether wiped out from her heart; and cynics who deride woman’s faithfulness, may cite with justice the instance of Cumlá Devi, as one of many inconstant wives. Transported with an emperor’s passion she no longer remembered her exiled husband; and the only thought of the past that occasionally intruded on her and disturbed her pleasures, was the solicitude she felt for an only and absent daughter, who shared the misfortunes of her father. This was the sole yearning which the emperor had been unable to satisfy, for this money could not procure; nor had imperial power hitherto been more successful in the matter. Many had been Álláudeon’s efforts to procure her this satisfaction, but all in vain; and when Álif Khán was ordered to march against the fortress of Deogiri he was particularly directed

to pass through Bagláná, where the ex-rájáh of Guzerát was supposed to reside, and spare no pains to capture his daughter. Álif Khán was young and ardent, and went about his business with alacrity. The rájáh was pursued to his last retreat. He was told that he would be left undisturbed if he gave up his daughter. But this proposal he rejected with scorn. He was then defeated, and his army dispersed. But the bird had flown meanwhile, none knew whither; and all Álif's efforts to obtain tidings of her were unsuccessful. A vague rumour only mentioned that she had been sent off to be married to a prince who had long solicited her hand; but who that fortunate prince was, or of what country, Álif Khán could not discover.

The accident which at last crowned the research of the Mogul leader with success has been told. Álif Khán was delighted with his prize, and immediately hastened with it to Delhi. Great was the joy of Álláudeen when the maiden was brought to the capital; greater still that of Cumlá Devi. Nor was Dewal Devi herself much grieved at the turn her affairs had taken. She loved, dearly loved her kind father. But the husband he had chosen for her was not to her liking, and the protection to which he had committed her was therefore disagreeable. The rájáh of Deogiri was a Mahrattá, and Rájpoote women in those days held alliances with Mahrattás to be almost as degrading as those with Mahomedans. True, it had been foretold to her by a wandering gipsy that the thread of her life was to be mingled with a foreign yarn; but that did not reconcile her in the least to the disagreeable Deogiri prince as her mate. Sunkuldeo was an ill-looking and exhausted debauchee, who, though at the sunny side of thirty, had already outlived his youth; and it was certainly excusable in a young and lovely maiden that she could not look upon him without aversion. She had never indeed, ventured to expostulate with her father on the subject; and he, interpreting her silence into acquiescence, had sent her to Deogiri for the consummation of the marriage. But now

that things had so unexpectedly taken a different turn, she could not but feel delighted at her escape.

Notwithstanding this however, the meeting of the princess with her mother was at first very cold and unloving. Dewal Devi could not overlook her mother's fault in forgetting her fond, affectionate husband in the embraces of an infidel. Natural partiality endeavoured to palliate her guilt on the plea of circumstances. Circumstances had placed her in the power of the Mahomedan, and forced her to her present lot ; but to love that lot and the prince who had led her to it was a feeling of the heart which no circumstances could have enforced. She therefore gazed on her with a confused feeling, in which her stern, moral rectitude contended with deep and tender affection. Nature however proved stronger at last, her countenance brightened, she could control her feelings no longer, and she flung her arms around her mother's neck, and wept.

It needs not to narrate at length how the maiden was lodged, and how her time was spent. She occupied splendid saloons attached to her mother's apartments, and lived for a time screened from all intrusion. Of course she breathed the choicest perfumes of Arabia, and the sweetest spices of Ceylon ; but this is not food sufficient for a maiden's heart, and she was soon languishing in her sweet captivity. Her sympathies, hitherto connected with the fortunes of her father, had now been forced to take another course. Her situation, occupations, pleasures, enjoyments—all contributed to stifle her feelings for him ; or, if those feelings yet retained their strength, they no longer engrossed her thoughts. Besides, she was now just at that age when not to love is to be miserable. But, as yet, she had not seen any object worthy of her affection.

If Dewal Devi, however, had not been observant, it is not to be concluded that she herself was unobserved. Like her, Khizer, the eldest son of the emperor, was also at that age when the blood runs tumultuously through the

veins, and the heart sighs for communication with a kindred spirit. He had seen and was deeply enamoured of her, and had applied to his father for permission to espouse her. This permission too had been accorded, on the only condition of his winning her affection, which Álláudeen, for the passion he felt for her mother, said he would never enforce. And thus matters stood for the time.

* * * * *

It was a clear evening, and Dewal Devi was sitting by a latticed window that overlooked the beautiful zenáná gardens, dreaming of things which maidens only will think of. At this moment the door of her apartment was suddenly opened, and to her surprise the prince stood before her. She rose with downcast eyes to receive him, and her cheeks were suffused with blushes. Her agitation served only to heighten her charms; and Khizer stood with arms folded, keeping his eyes steadily fixed on her beauty, as if speechless with astonishment. At last Dewal Devi was the first to break silence.

“What seeks the emperor’s son in the apartment of his slave?”

“Permission to throw himself at your feet, lady,” said the impassioned Khizer, and knelt before her.

The vows and loves of the prince were poured into a willing ear. He was young, handsome, and brave, accomplishments which the maiden’s heart acknowledged with a throb; and his sweet disposition obtained an easy conquest over her affections. The festivals which celebrated the royal nuptials were grand and sumptuous; and the loves of the happy pair have been deservedly immortalized by the poet Khusroo, the greatest genius of his age.

THE REMOVAL OF THE CAPITAL.

Among the many whims of Mahomed Toglek none occasioned so much misery or gave rise to so many complaints, as that of transferring the capital from Delhi to Deogiri, thence called Dowlatabád, or the fortunate city. The design, if not unreasonable in theory, was carried out with such precipitancy and harshness as to cause an extensive degree of pain and distress among the poorer classes of society. And the rich also were put to an unusual degree of concern and inconvenience in being compelled to desert a metropolis with which their fortunes, interests, and predilections were too closely connected.

* * * * *

"Weep not, wife of my bosom," said Abdalláh to his bride. "We are not alone in our misery. Thousands will suffer like ourselves from this cruel and unjust decree, and many with more bitterness of spirit than ourselves. God will not desert either them or us in our affliction."

"God will not forget us indeed," answered the sobbing wife; "God cannot forget his creatures in distress. But here is the mound of our first-born. Rememberest not, Abdalláh, how we loved him? Here is all the memorial that now remains to me of him," said the mother, leaning upon a little mound of earth before their humble cottage; "and how can I part from this without a tear?"

Abdalláh only answered her with a groan, and the tears ran down his cheeks. Zabidá clasped her remaining child on her bosom and wept.

It was a cheerless day; the sixth of a cheerless journey. A tumultuous crowd were proceeding from Delhi to Dowlatabád. The metropolis of India was left a habitation for owls and the wild beasts of the desert; and with tears and groans the populace were proceeding to the new capital, ever and anon giving vent to curses not loud but deep. Of this vast crowd Abdalláh, and his wife, and their little babe formed a part. It was the sixth day of their cheer-

less journey ; and tired with the march, and fainting for lack of food, the weary travellers had arrived at a desolate village, where no food was to be procured. They had arrived there at a time of famine, and the officers of the commissariat had not done their duty. Abdalláh looked at the face of his wife in dumb despair ; while the unhappy mother, holding her babe closer in her arms, gave it her sapless breast.

The night was passed without food. Day dawned, but brought with it no hope of succour. Then rose a piercing cry of distress amongst the weak and helpless ; while the stronger cursed loudly the inhuman emperor, whose unfeeling edict had reduced them to such desperate circumstances. But heavier troubles yet awaited them ; and on none did the pressure of the calamity fall more heavily than on the delicate Zabidá. The officers of the tyrant apprehended all who had cursed the king and his edict in their distress ; and bound hand and foot they were sent to court with rude haste, to receive due punishment. Abdalláh was of the number ; and on the dreary route Zabidá was left alone, amidst a host of strangers, with a baby on her arms, to prosecute a dreary and now hopeless journey.

“ Oh God ! ” exclaimed the unhappy wife and afflicted mother, “ how have I deserved this ? ”

Zabidá sat with her head bowed on her breast, for she could not bear to look about her and miss her only friend and protector ; and the tears ran plentifully down her cheek. She had now none to help her, and she thought of lying down on the road-side till death should relieve her ; but the fond burthen on her breast reminded her of her duty. Alas ! what greater trials were yet in store for her !

In her next day's journey, sinking under the load of her afflictions, and weary and faint-hearted, she fell considerably in the rear, and, having sat down perfectly exhausted, found, when she awoke to consciousness, that she was alone with her child. How dreary were her lonely

moments ! The night was hastening apace. The caravan was out of sight. Knowing however, that it must halt, or had already halted, somewhere forward, she determined to exert all her little energies to overtake it ; and she rose and struggled to drag herself on.

It was the dread hour of gloaming. The sun's last beams had disappeared from the top of the distant Arávulli mountains, when she heard the trampling of horses behind her, and saw two horsemen galloping towards her with speed. They wore the uniform of the royal guards, and Zabidá shrunk from their path as men shrink to avoid an adder, for she felt Abdalláh's wrongs. The horsemen were now near, and they gazed on the heart-stricken woman with lascivious rudeness, then suddenly dismounting laid hold of her hand. Zabidá shrieked and struggled, but her shrieks and struggles availed her not.

"We will do thee no harm," said one of the ruffians, "if thou wilt quietly follow us. If not—"

The soul of Zabidá shrunk at the horrible threat they threatened her. She could not choose but follow them, and while she wept streams of tears, her little babe, as if conscious of its mother's distress, wept also. One of the soldiers now took up the poor woman on his powerful steed, then, passing out of the great highroad, they rode at a rapid pace through narrow by-paths and strange alleys. Horses were changed and lackeys awaited them wherever they alighted, but they still rode on night and day. At last they reached a very retired country ; and here Zabidá and her child were consigned to a little cottage, and placed under the care of an old woman.

"This will be thy prison, girl, for a fortnight, and this mother thy warder. When we come back we will bring thee deliverance," said one of the ruffians with a smile. And then they parted.

When Zabidá found herself alone she groaned with agony under the irremediable oppression she suffered, and remained so long lost in the depth of her miserable reflec-

tions that her old custodian thought she had sunk under her misfortunes. But the cries of her little one recalled the mother to her senses; and the treatment she received from her attendant was excessively kind. All the efforts of Zabidá to discover the name and rank of her persecutors, however, proved fruitless. To all such questions the old woman had but one answer, "I know not;" and nothing could induce her to be more explicit. To prevent also every possibility of her gaining any information, Zabidá was not allowed to stir from her apartment; and when she once attempted to do so while her attendant was asleep, she discovered that there were others besides that attendant who kept guard over her, for a rough man who lived hard by compelled her to return to her quarters.

Leaving the weeping Zabidá in her prison-house the reader must hasten to the capital of Deogiri, to the court of Mahomád Toglek. The emperor had just removed his family to the new city, and for the second time brought over the Delhians. The court here was as ostentatious as at the old capital, except that some of the refractory nobles had not yet arrived. The prisoners taken on the route were all brought before the king. The accusation of the imperial officers was publicly read. They had spoken irreverently of the imperial edict and abused the king. None ventured to deny the charge; and, in the first paroxysm of rage, the emperor ordered them to be thrown into prison, but on after-thought changed the decree to what he conceived a harsher one—banishment to the deserted capital of Delhi.

The prisoners were accordingly hurried back again to Delhi, and Abdalláh along with the rest. They entered the city; but, habituated to its noise and population, were struck with the deep, lifeless, and terrific silence which now reigned in it. Its magnificent palaces and colossal pillars and porticoes, marble baths and banqueting-houses, which formerly had been daily seen without exciting any feeling either of astonishment or admiration, now in desolation filled their minds with an unspeakable emotion.

But Abdalláh did not gaze on them long. With hurried steps he retired to an obscure corner of the city where stood his home. Home!—but where were those who made it what it was? The cottage was now tenantless, wild weeds were on the yard, and even over the mound of his first-born had sprung the creepers of the desert. The words of the poet then occurred to him: “I came to the home of my forefathers, and asked where are they?—and echo answered—Where?” Abdalláh smote his head and threw dust upon it, and departed never more, as he thought, to return thither again.

It was a clear and cloudless night. The moon moved on her bright path in the shining heavens, surrounded by a peerless diadem of stars. Abdalláh could not rest; even tears refused to relieve him; and he walked out beneath the brilliant sky as far as his feet could carry him. Miles and miles were passed over. At last fatigue overpowered him. How far he had wandered he knew not, but the changing shadows in the east already announced the approach of day, and, unable to proceed further, he stretched himself on the bare ground for repose.

But a sound of wailing through the still air came to his ear; it was the wailing of one too deeply smitten; it was the wailing voice of a woman. Abdalláh arose. Far in the distance was a little cottage from which issued a dim light and the voice of woe. Abdalláh approached it, but he had not advanced twenty yards when a gruff sentinel opposed him.

“Stop! Pass not further on your life.”

Abdalláh was brave and chivalrous. Tyranny he abhorred in all shapes; and the voice of wailing, coupled with the strictness of the watch, showed him that there was some foul play on hand.

“One to one is a pretty good match, friend,” said he to the sentinel; “you prevent me to proceed further, I insist on doing so. Let us see how the affair terminates.”

“With thy life, then,” said the sentinel, and laid his

hand on his sword; but, ere that sword could leave its scabbard, a powerful hand had levelled him with the ground, and with such violence that the blood gushed from his mouth and he was insensible. Abdalláh now neared the hut. That voice, merciful Heaven! was it the voice of Zabidá? He burst into the cottage. The damsel was sitting on the clay floor with her baby on her lap. One word only burst from the lips of the husband—"Zabidá!" and he flung his hands around her neck. The grief of Zabidá now gave way to surprise and joy; but time was precious, and Abdalláh took his wife by the hand, and led her out of her prison; while the old woman who kept her company, unable to offer opposition, gave exercise to her lungs, and screamed aloud, "The thief, the thief."

Abdalláh was now in the open air, and went forward hurriedly. Approaching the dying sentinel, he armed himself with his arms, and then proceeded towards the desolate city of his exile. They had not gone many steps, however, when they saw a brace of horsemen at their heels. Zabidá clung closer to her husband at the sight, while the equestrians thus conversed with each other in loud whispers:—

"There, my liege, is the fugitive lady," said one to the other.

"She seems to have picked up a cavalier of her own choosing, I see," was the reply. "I told you, Ásaph, women should not be so left."

"But the late emperor's orders, your majesty, wanted us to be present at the capital on the court day."

"True, and to humour him you prevented me from tasting my prize, till it was lost to me."

"It is not yet lost, my liege," rejoined Ásaph.

"I fear it is. They seem man and wife, and it shall not be said that the Emperor Feroze commenced his reign by snatching the wife of a subject from his arms. No, Ásaph, I have had enough of the frolic, and must wash my hands clean of it now."

"If your majesty only fears a bad name," said the

wily pander, "leave the affair to your slavo, and proceed to the capital by a different route. I shall have the beauty conveyed to your *hárem*."

This was accordingly acted upon as the best suggestion. The Emperor Feroze fell back; while Ásaph pressing forward came up to the fugitives, and in an angry voice demanded of Abdalláh how he had dared to bring out the woman from her refuge, without the permission of her protectors.

"I am not in the habit of dealing with my wife with the permission of others," drily answered the husband; "and as you see your object is frustrated, you need not trouble yourself more about this affair, nor take pains to remind a husband how much you have insulted him."

"You crow too loud, young man, and think mighty high of yourself, no doubt; but before we part I'll read thee a lesson how to treat thy betters. Unhold the lady, slave, or thou diest."

One moment Abdalláh hesitated, then drew out his sword, and with a single blow cut down the horse of his antagonist, which at once brought Ásaph to the ground.

"Now that I have dismounted thee, my friend, I think you will find I can keep my own. Take to your heels, vile pander, or, if thou servest a king, go bring a host to rob me of my own."

Ásaph had by this time recovered his feet and unsheathed his sword; but Abdalláh was quicker in his movements, and the haughty and noble pander soon lay bleeding on the ground.

Abdalláh gazed on the face of Zabidá, and drew her nearer to his breast. "We must fly, for the vengeance of the mighty will pursue the murderer of his slave. We must fly, dearest, though I know not whither."

"You shall need no such precaution," said a third person who had stolen on them unawares. "It has been done fairly, and, as the Emperor Feroze did you some wrong, he guarantees you safety from the consequences."

It was the beginning of a new reign. Delhi was once more the imperial capital. The plan of the late emperor had entirely failed even in his own lifetime. The poorer classes, finding no employment in Dowlatábád, were reduced to the utmost distress. The old capital was therefore again resumed; and, amongst the many families that returned to happiness, none was so happy as that of Abdalláh.

THE GENEROSITY OF TIMOUR.

HUSHED was the sack and conflagration of Delhi. The spoliation was one of unusually long duration, and had continued throughout with unintermitted violence, till at last the troops were wearied with their own excesses, and there remained nothing to plunder. The metropolis of a hundred kings lay denuded of its brightest ornaments and its most precious treasures, while heaps of the dead choked up the streets, sending forth an offensive odour which absolutely necessitated the departure of the invading army. Then were issued the orders for that army to move off; and, while the shouts of the soldiery died away in the distance, Timour entered the beautiful mosque of polished marble erected by Feroze on the banks of the Jumná, to offer up to God his tribute of gratitude and praise.

Timour prayed with uplifted eyes, and, it is said, tears ran down his rugged checks while he rendered thanks to the Most High. When he came out of the place of worship, however, he had completely dried them; and the first thing he did was to order the arrest of all workers in stone and marble as prisoners of war.

"It were a shame," said he, "that people should say, 'Timour, the conqueror of the world, had no mosque worthy of a king to pray in.' Yonder is a noble building,

and the masons of Delhi must build me one as good at Samarkand."

The orders of the king were carried out with the usual celerity. A large number of masons and stone-cutters were secured; and they were hurried on with the army, far from their country and their friends.

It was the ninth day of Timour's retreat from Delhi. The army had encamped on the skirts of the Murree Hills, and a dangerous journey lay before them across the higher mountains. The soldiers, however, made light of traversing those inhospitable regions, and were indulging freely in the use of intoxicating liquors interdicted by the Korán. Mirth and hilarity had risen to the highest pitch, and the captors and their prisoners were drinking together, when a general toast was proposed to the health of Timour. This was drunk with boisterous merriment by all the company, with the exception of two young prisoners—brothers, as they professed to be—who did not respond to it. The elder of these recusants could not be more than eighteen years old, perhaps not so much, but he was tall and well-grown, with slight though remarkably well-proportioned limbs. The younger was a mere child, perhaps fourteen years old, with eyes which were large, dark, and particularly striking, and possessing that rich clear brown tint so constantly to be met with in India, and sometimes so very much prized in woman. Their recusancy at once arrested general attention.

"Heaven shield you, my boys!" said a goodnatured old soldier; "are you aware what risks you run?" while others cried out on all sides, "Hew them down," "Tear them to pieces," "Let the sword teach them good manners and loyalty;" and in a few seconds they would have paid the penalty of their rashness, but for the kind interference of the old soldier and the terror of Timour's name. Timour, though rockless himself, was a strict disciplinarian, and his soldiers always stood in great awe of him. They had all drawn out their poniards to punish the insult offered to their king; but when their grey-headed,

comrade interfered, and pointed out that Timour would never approve of such summary proceeding, those poniards were quietly replaced in their belts.

Timour was alone with his *moonshee* in his tent, the latter penning despatches, when an attendant officer advanced towards the king, and, making a profound reverence, informed him of the foregoing occurrence.

"Are they prisoners?" inquired the king.

"Yes, Light of the World! They were taken up as stone-cutters and workers in marble," answered the reporting officer.

"Young both?"

"One a mere child, my lord."

Timour bit his thumb. "We must spare their lives, then," said he, "for we very much require the use of their art. Let them be stripped and flogged before the whole army to-morrow; and proclaim it to all that, in future, similar ebullitions of disaffection would be more severely punished."

All were astir at an early hour the next morning, and the whole army was drawn out to see the culprits punished. As soon as the preparations were completed, the elder of the two offenders was stripped of his upper clothing; and they were proceeding to do the same with the younger, when the blood rushed to the lily cheeks of the slender youth, and the next moment he was in a swoon.

"Pest on it! What's the matter now!" exclaimed the officer who was thus interrupted in the performance of his duty. But the blooming complexion of the boy excited his pity, and he brought him back to consciousness by the application of restoratives.

"For my own part," said he, "I would rather kiss thee, my boy, than flog thee; but the king's orders must be obeyed," and he proceeded to strip him again, when the blood rushed once more to the cheeks of the young man, and he was only prevented from falling to the ground by the hands which supported him. The rising breast and

flowing hair now revealed the secret. It was a woman ! The officer desisted at once from carrying out his unpleasant orders, while information of the discovery was conveyed to the king.

"Heaven help us !" exclaimed Timour, in astonishment ; " how romantic these Indians are ! There must be some love-tale at bottom, I am sure. Bring both the culprits to our presence, and we shall probe this matter further."

The two young persons were brought before him accordingly. Timour looked hard at the maiden for some time. " Who and what art thou ? " he demanded at last, fixing his eyes on her more encouragingly.

"An orphan," answered the girl, "and you have bereaved me of my parents."

"How so ? Tell us your story."

" 'Tis brief. My father was one of the richest merchants of the city of Delhi, and, blessed with everything that makes the world desirable, he passed his days in peace and happiness, till the destroying-angel visited our country. You came and marred our felicity. My father was killed by your soldiery, who also plundered all his wealth ; and my mother died by her own hands to save herself from dishonour."

"And thou ? " demanded Timour.

"I found means to escape, and sought refuge with a friend ; and when he was compelled to follow in your train, I bore him company under the protection of this habit."

"Wert thou not afraid to place thyself in my power ? Now that thy disguise is discovered, what hast thou to protect thee ? "

The maiden gave no answer, but from the folds of her garment drew out a small poniard and showed it to the king.

"Wrench the weapon from her hand," said Timour ; and a number of attendant officers rushed forward to do so. But the maiden pointed it to her heart with so reso-

lute a hand that Timour was obliged to countermand his order.

"Thou need'st no poniard to defend thee," said the king. "Timour pledges thee his royal word that thou shalt receive no harm."

The maiden smiled a smile of distrust; while Timour, turning towards the other offender, accosted him thus:—

"Wert thou the friend to whom the maiden turned in her distress?"

"Yes."

"And how had you so deserved her confidence?"

"We were known to each other as children. When she came to seek my protection I was her betrothed husband."

"Who betrothed ye?"

"Our parents."

"And what became of thy parents—are they living?"

"How shall a prisoner answer that question?" exclaimed the young man, his countenance becoming suddenly clouded; then, remembering his position, he added, "They fell to satisfy the cruelty of your officers."

The adamant heart of Timour was moved; he paced slowly to and fro, then confronting the elder prisoner resumed his questions.

"You are a mason?"

"I am."

"Hast thou observed the mosaic ornaments on the outer gate of the mosque of Feroze?"

"I have."

"That beautiful design which represents the angel Gabriel as descending to the Prophet with the Korān in his hand?"

"Yes."

"Could you imitate it?"

"To be sure I can, and, what is more, few else can do it," said the young man with an honest pride.

Timour paced backwards and forwards again, then said, "Ye have both suffered by me—suffered greatly. I am

willing now to make ye all the reparation in my power. Wealth and influence I will give you ; and your happiness in each other shall be promoted, not opposed. But you must proceed with me to Samarkand." To this the prisoners made no reply ; while Timour ordered them to be removed, liberated on parole, and well-treated.

The evening was delightful, and their way through the mountains was marked by numberless sights of beauty. Timour had sat down and employed himself with business to a late hour ; and now, feeling heated and oppressed, he arose and quitted his camp, to take a solitary stroll among the picturesque but dangerous scenery. He had passed through those regions before, and his arms had pursued the banditti of the hills to their fastnesses, burned their huts, and plundered their property ; and yet he now pursued his path alone among them, utterly indifferent to the peril to which he exposed himself. The silence around him was great, and hardly disturbed except by the discordant shriek of some bird of prey startled in its sombre haunt by the presence of man, or the lone bleating of the wild-goat that peeped down from some rocky crag upon the daring intruder. A turn in the road brought Timour suddenly before a cottage, at the entrance of which sat a figure, human indeed, but so savage and uncouth in his appearance that even Timour beheld him with alarm. His form was athletic, his features sun-burnt and swarthy, and the expression of his countenance reckless, bold, and ferocious. A beard, bushy and dark, gave the figure a most dismal appearance ; and Timour almost thought of turning from his path to avoid him. But this the mountaineer prevented him from doing ; for he arose from where he sat, and, ere Timour could defend himself or withdraw, he seized him by the throat and held up his dagger to stab him. That moment had been Timour's last, if a friendly hand had not interfered to save his life. A third person had witnessed the whole scene, and falling upon the wild mountaineer just in time to frustrate his evil intention, threw him on the ground, and dealt him a

mortal wound. The whole was the work of a moment ; and, when the king turned round to thank his deliverer, great was his surprise to see in him the young mason. Curiosity had led the mason thither by a different route, and he was screened behind some high jungle-weeds when he found himself called upon to rescue the murderer of his parents.

"Ask any favour and thou shalt have it," said the king.

"Freedom, then," answered the mason ; "mine and that of my betrothed wife."

Timour bit his lips in vexation, for he had not expected such a request ; but the very little stock of good nature he had triumphed for the moment.

"You shall have it," he replied, "and wealth also to enjoy it;" and he kept his word.

The young mason and his wife lived long and happily to bear testimony to this single instance of generosity and gratitude in the great destroyer.

THE GOLDSMITH'S DAUGHTER.

ZEINÁ, the daughter of a goldsmith, then only eight years old, was passing through a street of Delhi with other ragged children of her age, when, in a corner of the street, they met a great crowd collected around an extremely old woman, who was playing the sibyl and prophesying the future fortunes of such of the passengers as could pay her a premium. The crowd was very great, but the woman went through her task with perfect composure. To one she promised a good husband, another she forewarned of a false friend, a third was promised a prize in the lottery, a fourth foretold great gain in merchandise, and so on.

Little Zeiná stood in the crowd. Her companions pressed her to come away, but curiosity in some children

is often more ardent than in grown-up men; and the goldsmith's daughter would fain have her future fortunes read. But something must be given to propitiate the fates. Zeiná had nothing about her but a small silver coin, her birthday present from her mother; and this she agreed to part with to learn her fate. Such we are from childhood to old age! The same inquisitiveness that influences the conduct of a child influences also the conduct of a man. All are anxious to lift that veil which Heaven in mercy has suspended between the present and the future; all are solicitous to know about the things to come. The child sacrifices to this curiosity its birthday present, and man sacrifices to it many a solid comfort; dull wits surrender their confidence to palmistry, the philosopher submits to be humbugged by clairvoyance.

Zeiná held out her little palm before the prophetic sibyl, with the small coin upon it to conciliate her favour. The delighted crone pocketed the silver with great satisfaction; and, as if the more precious the bribe the greater the difficulty to read the fates, she took the little palm in her hands and observed each line carefully over. Long and anxiously she gazed on the marks that intersected that little hand, rubbed off the rheum from her old eyes more than once to read more clearly the indications of each indented line, then, taking up the child in her sapless arms, raised her above the crowd, exclaiming with as loud a voice as her feebleness could command: "This child is born to be an empress, and the mother of an emperor." The crowd, most of whom well knew the goldsmith's daughter, thereupon set up a tremendous laugh, while some of the more waggish fellows demanded if it was her silver coin or her palm that had suggested the prophecy. Little Zeiná, however, was highly delighted, and her companions began already to be envious of her future honours.

Time passed on. Zeiná got reconciled to her little playfellows, for the prophecy had not yet come to pass. She began also to bud into beauty. The poets of all

climes have called that the sweetest age of life when the blossom opens into a flower, and verily it is the sweetest age of all so long as there is no cankerworm to fix upon the unfolding leaves. Zeiná's youth was all sunshine and smiles. Newly-awakened thoughts and feelings did not contributed to darken the laughing groundwork of her existence. If happiness was yet a dream, it was not a troubled dream; for buoyant were the hopes of the young maiden, as the hopes of young maidens always are. No bird was more glad-hearted than the goldsmith's daughter while bursting into girlhood.

Attached to her father's house was a beautiful wood, deep and umbrageous, alive with the sweetest melodies of birds; and here Zeiná was always fond of lingering away her hours. The deep notes of the *shámá*, the ringing carol of the *chukor*, the silvery song of the *bulbul*, the melting coo of the *cushat*, mingling together, made for her ears an aerial concert; while the blushing rose, the bold *belá*, and the coy *chumpá*, combining their fragrance, delighted a heart that had never tasted of misery; and thus in sweet and undisturbed tranquillity passed away the hours of the goldsmith's daughter.

"Where have you been, Zeiná?" her fond mother would ask her when she returned after hours of absence to her apartment. "Where have you been, and what have you been doing these long, long hours?"

"Oh, I have been to my little paradise, mamma," was always the reply, "and I was there listening to the birds that were singing so sweetly."

Merrily passed the hours, days, and months with Zeiná, the goldsmith's daughter. But woman must love. In loneliness there is an emptiness of heart, and that void must be filled. Zeiná loved the *chukor* that daily poured such rich melody into her ears: but the *chukor* had a mate. The *bulbul* sang, oh, how sweetly! But for whom sang he but his partner, who, delighting to hear his music, concealed herself amongst the leaves? The *cushat*-cock whistled peace and love into the ears of an

enraptured companion that never deserted his side. Zeiná only was alone. The rose bloomed in pairs, the *beldá* and the *chumpá* had friends to vie with and make love to. Zeiná had none to bloom with her; Zeiná had none to make love to. Love! What is love? Zeiná yet knew it not, and she was happy—happy with her birds and flowers.

But there was something in her heart that was unsatisfied—a vague feeling or fancy, an undefined yearning after something more undefined than that yearning itself. It did not make her miserable; oh no, Zeiná was bright-eyed still. It did not damp her ardour; no, Zeiná was as ardent as ever. But, at times, it would make her thoughtful, even while her heart was overflowing with happiness.

The fame of Zeiná's beauty spread far and wide, and gained her many admirers among the exquisites of Delhi; but these were all unsuitable matches for her, at least in the estimation of her fond father. The goldsmith remembered the old prophecy still, and though he despaired of ever having a king, he was determined to have a man of substance for his son-in-law; but not a man of substance would wed a goldsmith's daughter, and not one had yet asked her hand on whom the old tradesman could have gladly conferred it. This, however, was not always to be.

It was towards the genial eve of a very sultry day, that Zeiná and her father were walking arm-in-arm in the perfumed grove they called their paradise. The clustering bees hummed in commendation of the rare flowers that grew therein, and birds with their rich melody made the place well-favoured of Heaven. It was indeed a little paradise well worthy of the little Eve who had made and named it such; and in some respects it was a better Eden than that inhabited by our first parents, for here no serpent lurked upon the trees to tempt the bright-eyed mistress of the scene. The trees looked more beautiful, also, this evening, and the birds seemed more

softly musical than they ordinarily were; and father and child strayed on the gravel walks, indulging in many a delicious reverie, or engaged in pleasing conversation. Just, however, on turning into one of the many sylvan recesses which the branches of different trees commingling formed so artistically, they were surprised to hear a cheerful laugh before them, and still more astonished to behold a party of three young men, dressed *en militaire*, sporting together, tossing a ball from one to another. Zeinâ seeing them dropped her veil; while the young strangers on their part also checked their frolic, and even appeared a little confused. The goldsmith, however, ever kind-hearted as he was, encouraged them with a smile; and the foremost amongst them, apologizing for their intrusion, said that in their frolic in the street, having tossed the ball too far, they had lost it in the grove, and had jumped over the hedge to seek for it.

"And you have found it now?" asked the old man.

"Yes, sir, we have; and if we have been playing the truant since, that is only attributable to the beauty of your garden," answered the youngest of the party, with a candour and simplicity that called forth another smile on the goldsmith's face, and a stronger interest in the heart of his artless daughter.

The conversation now became general; a few words were lengthened out into many, and the three youths were invited home that evening by the good-hearted goldsmith.

"Come with me, my friends," he said. "You recall in me the days when I was young; my heart beats with rapture when I gaze on your shining faces; my spirits grow buoyant once more. Come with me, my young friends, and it will give me great delight to hear the stories of your lives and fortunes."

The face of the youngest youth became flushed, and there was a slight inflection of tremor in his voice as he, in common with his companions, thanked the old man for his kindness. Why was he thus agitated, and why

on hearing him did Zeiná blush deeply within her veil? Had they seen each other before? Never! But love is a mystery.

Seated in his closet, the goldsmith heard with rapture the history of the three youthful friends he had picked up. They were all soldiers of fortune, and, though young, had seen stirring scenes and encountered the reverses of fate. Two, however, were, after all, ordinary and every-day characters; and they had nothing very remarkable either in their appearance or history. But the third and youngest was above the common stamp. He was quite an Adonis in his features, of a fine dark colour, and a remarkably pleasing person. He had also many peculiar legends to tell about himself. We will give his history in his own words, that it may be the more briefly told.

"My name is Beloli. I am an orphan." (How the tears unconsciously came into the eyes of Zeiná at the soft avowal!) "My mother died in giving me life, and my father soon followed her."

"Alas, poor lad! hast thou then no friends on earth to stand beside thee at a pinch?" asked the goldsmith, his voice becoming almost hoarse with emotion.

"Friends enough, good father, have I," answered the boy in his usual reckless manner. "Here are three, two chums and my sword."

"You may add me to the number," said the goldsmith; and Zeiná also made some sweet secret confessions to herself.

"And my uncle," continued Beloli, "is as good and kind an uncle as ever breathed."

"But you forget your best friend, Beloli," observed one of his comrades with a sinister smile.

"Whom do you mean?"

"Fortune, of course, who has promised you a throne."

"A throne!" exclaimed the goldsmith, a bright idea flashing through his brain.

"A throne!" thought Zeiná, her calm, temperate.

countenance lighting up with an irradiating lustro, which was soon chased away by a blush.

"Yes, a throne has been promised me," observed the youth, "and these friends of mine are very assiduous in twitting me with it, because I paid in real gold for a dreamy promise." The intelligent eye was for a moment abashed, the affable heart for a moment confused; but he soon resumed his grace and gaiety as he continued,— "You may smile at my folly if you will; but Beloli is not ashamed of what he has done. I do not regret my bounty any more than I really expect a throne."

"But what is the story about it?" asked the goldsmith. "I will sympathize with your feelings, my boy, if you will confide it to me."

"It is soon told. A year has not yet passed over since we were crossing the wild Caucasian mountains. Our party was hailed by a holy *dervish*, who had wandered through many lands, over snowy hills and burning sands, reminding people of their God. He offered me the throne of India for the money in my purse, and I gave him my all to obtain his benedictions."

"You did well, young man," said the goldsmith; "and for that noble charity, though you may never get a throne in earnest, you well deserve one."

The old hopes and aspirations of the goldsmith for securing an imperial son-in-law were raked up once more by the revelations of Beloli, and he spent a whole night in revolving on them. But he was a man of the world, and fortune-telling and prophecies never weighed much in the scale of sober sense and sound judgment, in which he examined all matters of importance. He determined not to give way to superstitious and chimerical vagaries. "I am too old now," said he to himself, "to dream."

Beloli, however, became henceforth one of his most frequent guests. He had seen Zeinâ's beauty, and her image had made a deep impression on his heart, though he knew not well the nature of the infection he had

caught. He was in love, and so also was Zeiná, both head and ears in love. From utter strangers they soon became very familiar friends, and in time Beloli began to be looked upon as one of the family. But the course of true love, says the poet, never did run smooth; nor did it on the present occasion, for all these promising appearances.

The goldsmith was delighted to see a young soldier in love with his daughter; his pleasure was greater when he discovered that the passion was mutual. But when Islám Khán, governor of Sirhind, learnt that his nephew had formed an intimacy with a goldsmith's daughter, his anger knew no bounds. Beloli was his favourite; he loved him more than he loved his own sons; he had himself a marriageable daughter; that daughter and the government of Sirhind he designed for Beloli. He therefore instantly ordered him to his presence.

With a heavy heart Beloli bade adieu to the pleasures of Delhi. His last meeting with Zeiná was one of great anguish; and, while they repeated together their hopes and fears, a feeling of bitterness was felt by both usurping the place of every sweeter emotion. But true love never despairs. Though his uncle had interdicted the passion, Beloli vowed eternal fidelity to his sweetheart; and as he bade her adieu, he put into her hands a simple gold ring, on which were written two lines in verse:—

As ever true to God and thee,
Zeiná, think of Beloli.

Beloli then left Delhi, and set out for his uncle's dominions. Islám Khán was all impatience to see him; and the first question he asked him when he reached Sirhind was, "Are you married to the goldsmith's daughter?"

"No," answered Beloli; "I could not marry her without your approbation."

"Good," said the uncle, "you are welcome;" and his reception was indeed as kind and affectionate as reception by the dearest and nearest can be.

Nor did Islám Khán stop here. Preparations were immediately set on foot for the marriage of Beloli with his cousin. The bride was a pretty, interesting girl; but Beloli was blind to her charms. Nor was his opinion about the marriage asked. "Pooh!" said Islám Khán, when somebody suggested the necessity of obtaining his consent, "pooh! what has a young man like him to say in the matter?" Nor did Beloli offer any resistance to his uncle's pleasure. He had not the heart to disobey one who had in every respect been to him as affectionate as a parent; and in his present mood of mind he was unfit to expostulate. The nuptials were accordingly solemnized, but on the bridal night was the bride told, what she in fact had long before discovered, that, though her husband would ever be kind unto her, to love her was not in his power.

The intelligence of the great marriage was carried far and wide. It reached Delhi. Zeiná heard of it, and wept. These were her first tears; and yet how wretched they made her! In a few days the quick light step had fallen into the measure of age, the rose-like hue of her countenance had faded, the tint of her damask lip had grown pale; and she had grown more slender too, and the roundness of her cheeks had sunk. When in the presence of others, she always preserved a melancholy silence, which no effort could chase away; when alone, she sung by snatches mournful ditties, as if to remind herself of her misfortune.

O! look not at her gazelle eye,
O! look not on her raven hair;
For thou hast pledged to me thy truth,
Beneath the moonlight fair.

O! look not on her lily breast,
O! list not to her voice so gay;
Remember, love, the vows thou hast sworn,
Upon our parting day.

This, and such like, were the lays she sung—lays which

only kept open the sore in her heart. The old goldsmith gazed on the face of his sinking child with earnest tenderness. He walked with her in her paradise, he threaded with her the banks of the Jumná, he visited every place and scene which he thought would take off her melancholy and dejection. But all in vain. Neither the song of birds nor the beauty of fresh scenes could restore calmness to her thoughts, or tranquillity to her mind. The poet tells us that the miserable have no other medicine but hope. But to Zeiná even hope held out no promise; her lover was lost to her for ever.

Nor was Beloli less wretched. He too pined in secret for his first and only love; and the hardy young soldier was soon reduced from his former self to a wretched skeleton. In the opening dawn of manhood he lost the elasticity of youth and happiness; and, drooping and heart-broken, the iron constitution of the young soldier melted down rapidly into delicate health. Islám Khán viewed the change with deep regret. He in vain endeavoured to discover the cause. He would not understand it aright.

At last the time of Islám's departure from life drew nigh. A year had not yet passed over his daughter's marriage when he was taken very ill. They came—those men of learning, on whom we think so much, but on whom really so little depends of life or death. They went through the ceremonies of their profession, consulted with each other, and shook their heads. The hand of death was upon their patient, and his age shut out every hope of recovery. His sons and relatives crowded round the couch of the sufferer, and their presence brought him that relief which no medicine could afford. He spoke kindly to them, for he loved and was proud of them all.

"But where is Beloli?" asked the dying man. "Come nearer, boy, and let me bless thee."

Beloli came nearer, and pressed his uncle's hand. Islám looked up to him.

"Good God!" exclaimed the uncle, on beholding his

emaciated features, "how is the hardy young soldier, his uncle's pride, now changed! Beloli, I have not many moments to live; answer me faithfully and reveal what has reduced thee thus."

The young Lodi hung down his head.

"Zeinâ weeps over my plighted love," he said, "but—;" the words stuck in his throat, and he could not proceed.

"But," said the uncle, taking up his cue, "but for me you dare not bring her hither. See, I am dying. I will not prevent you long." These were the last words of Islâm Khân, governor of Sirhind.

Islâm Khân died. He had nominated Beloli his successor, and Beloli immediately stepped into the vice-regal post. Nor did he lose time in marrying the goldsmith's daughter, who had long forgotten her expectations of a throne. How Beloli Lodi afterwards cut out his way to the throne of India we cannot stop to relate. Historians tell us that he was a great king, who compelled every rebellious governor to submit to his arms, and restored the sovereignty—which during the weak reign of the Syeds had become nearly nominal—to a part of its former importance. Zeinâ bore him his successor Secunder, who, pursuing his father's vigorous policy, also succeeded in extending the limits of the imperial power. The sibyl's prophecy was fulfilled.

SANGA, KING OF MEWÂR.

On the banks of the Rotasery, at the distance of a few miles from Bagore, a party of Rájputs were located one fine evening, after having committed many depredations around. This sworn band of brothers was composed of desperate adventurers, drawn mostly from the dregs of

society, but headed by a man of some renown, namely, Kurrumchánd, chief of the Pramárás. The neighbourhood of Ajmere was generally the theatre of their crimes, but their name was mentioned with fear throughout the confines of Rájwárrá. It was after one of their raids, and a successful one, that they were thus resting in the place referred to, the chieftain taking his walk at a distance from his people, accompanied by two of them. Apart from all again, and underneath the shade of a large tree, there lay stretched at full length, and resting his head on his buckler, one of the party, a man of middle stature, fair complexion, and apparently under thirty years of age. His form was well-knit and exhibited great muscular strength, and on his countenance, though now composed in slumber, physiognomy might have read the traits of a master-mind. He was a volunteer to the body of which he had become a prominent member; but none knew anything of his life and social position. They all, however, regarded him with awe and respect, for there was not a braver man in their band; while the chief himself always treated his unknown soldier with peculiar deference, and oft foretold that Abho (the name by which he passed among them) was born to be a king.

The rays of the sinking sun were just playing on the tops of the higher trees, and in some places with the ripples of the stream, when Kurrumchánd, with his companions Mároo and Jesso Sendil, returning from their walk, approached the encampment. The subject of their conversation was Ábho, the unknown volunteer.

"Where didst thou find him, Jesso? A hardier recruit was never brought to our little army before."

"I found him tending goats in the neighbourhood of Baleáh, and high words were then passing between him and his employer, a sturdy peasant, who abused him as being too stupid for the trade. I read in his face that he disdained a shepherd's slothful life, and I offered him service as a soldier in your name."

"Thou never didst a better thing in thy life. He has

the stamp of greatness on him. Look where he slumbers ! Even in his sleep he looks a monarch."

A ray of the sinking sun, reflected from the bosom of the Rotasery, fell near to the sleeper's face, and discovered to the approaching soldiers a black and fearful snake coiled round his neck, shielding his face with its hood as with an umbrella. Kurrumchánd in alarm drew out his sword ; but Mároo forcibly held him by the hand.

"Didst thou not foretell it shall be so ? Mark how the serpent serves him ! It is a *Chuthurdháree* that sleeps."

As they spoke, the snake, startled by their approach, uncoiled itself, and slowly retreated to its burrow at the foot of the tree.

When Ábho awoke he found Kurrum, Mároo, and Jesso kneeling at his side. They told him the strange sight they had seen, and proffered him the homage due to kings. But he repelled their obedience with firmness ; and the matter, so far as Ábho was concerned, appeared to be soon forgotten. It was not, however, forgotten by Kurrumchánd, who tried by every means to strengthen the connection which existed between them. Kurrum had a daughter named Meerá, who for her uncommon beauty was generally called the sylph of the mountains. Almost all his young soldiers had paid court to her, and Ábho among the rest, but Kurrum, in spite of all his prepossessions for the unknown soldier, had hitherto discountenanced the suit. The tables were now turned. He was now never so well pleased as when he saw Ábho and Meerá together ; and when Ábho, receiving encouragement, asked again for her hand, it was no longer denied to him.

"I am very fortunate indeed," said Ábho, "in succeeding to secure such a lovely wife."

"You owe your good fortune, my son," replied Kurrum, "to the black serpent that had coiled itself around your neck."

In the depths of the forest dwelt an old man whose head was bleached by the heat of a hundred and thirty

summers, and whose sanctity was well-known far and near. He could see into futurity with a clear sight, and reveal secrets which were withheld from other mortals. Many were the devotees who sought his retreat, and none ever came who returned in doubt. One day Kurrum-chánd and Ábho, chasing a hare, came before his cell. The hare, pursued by the huntsmen, cowered before the hermit for shelter, as if well appreciating his inoffensive character.

"Ah! poor hare," said the sage, "thou remindest me of the soul of a sinner beset by fiends. Remain where thou art. Here neither man nor beast can harm thee."

The hare stood still, and the huntsmen also, for they found themselves unable to stir till the holy man gave them leave to come forward. He received them, as he received all, with kind, paternal hospitality, and asked them their names.

"Why, father," answered Kurrum, "they say you do not need to be told anything. Won't your knowledge tell you who we are?"

"Yes, child, you are a froward and spoilt man; your name is Kurrum, and your profession robbery."

"And my friend?"

"No friend of robbers and outlaws, though for a time he consorts with them. He is thy master. But it is too early yet for thee to know it. Treat him as thy prince, and as thy son, which thou hast made him. Thou shalt never repent having done so." Then, approaching nearer to Ábho, he asked him: "Rememberest thou what was foretold thee by the priestess at Náhrá Mugro?"

"I do," replied Ábho, "but it was a vain prophecy."

"No, young man; Cháruni Devi's priestess never lies. Despair not, and thou shalt have what has been promised to thee; take this, keep this, and be invincible in arms."

He drew out from the folds of his garment a small velvet bag, which with a little coloured tape he hung round the young soldier's neck.

"Fortune will never depart from thee if thou lovest not

this charm, and in the hour of thy greatest prosperity forget not me."

He then waved his hands, and, struck with his deportment and words, they left him.

Kurruṃ was now curious to know more. From the tone in which the old saint had addressed Ábho, and from the allusions he had made in speaking to him, the chief understood clearly that to Ábho himself his birth and station were not unknown. Circumstances only must have then made him seek concealment in a humbler sphere, and he burned to know all about the matter, and tried many ways to do it; but Ábho was not to be thrown off his guard.

Time passed on. Returning one evening from one of their raids, Kurruṃ and his party suddenly encountered a body of Moguls, who equalled them in number, and perhaps in hardihood also, and who seemed determined to oppose their progress. The Rájputs were laden with booty, and therefore anxious to avoid an encounter; but their enemies dashed after them in a manner that made it impossible to do so. The Rájputs met their enemies with their accustomed bravery; but the fighting soon grew so fierce and savage on both sides that it threatened a total extirpation of the combatants. To prevent this Ábho proposed a decision by single combat, and challenged the bravest of the Moslem host. The gage was immediately accepted. A strong, fierce-looking Mogul, the chief of his band, and in the meridian of his years, came forward to meet him. The contest was desperate, but generally equal, till both were simultaneously disarmed. Still unwilling to leave it undecided, they fiercely grappled with each other. At last both came down together, and Ábho, having the better hold, now succeeded by a sudden effort to throw his adversary on his back. To plant his knee on his breast was then the work of a second, and, grasping him by the throat, he searched for some weapon to thrust into his heart. Fortunately he had none. The nobleness of his nature now suggested a

more generous course. Both parties were awaiting with intense suspense the final issue of the conflict. Ábho, satisfied with the extent of his triumph, now let go his hold. The Moslem, instantly starting on his feet, demanded a renewal of the fight with arms.

"Some other time," said Ábho; "thou art in no plight to repeat the combat with me now. But trust me we shall meet again."

"Not so," said the Mogul; "Báber cannot brook such an overthrow as he has received from thee. I was not prepared to find a stronger man than myself in Hindustán. Arm thyself once more. I may not stoop to meet thee hereafter on equal terms."

"Art thou Báber, king of Fergháná? Well met, chief! I am Sanga, prince of Mewár."

The soldiers on both sides heard with surprise the important disclosure, nor was Báber any longer anxious to settle scores with his adversary on the spot. He held out his hand with frankness to the heathen prince, who pressed it with equal ardour, and on that spot was the ex-chief of Fergháná promised the support of Mewár against the emperor of Delhi.

That fraternal and patriotic forbearance which actuated Sanga to hide in obscure retreats his birthright, rather than plunge his father and country into intestine dissensions while his impetuous brother Prithu aspired to the throne, was no longer put to the proof when the existence of Prithu was violently cut short by another hand. Raemul dying immediately after, Sanga succeeded to the throne of Mewár, overcoming such little opposition as a few disaffected chiefs ventured to offer. Then was fulfilled what had been foretold by the priestess of Cháruni Devi, that, of the three sons of Raemul, Sanga alone was destined to succeed to the throne. The reign of Sanga proved very prosperous to his country. History bears testimony to the fact that his people were, notwithstanding the disturbed state of the times, pre-eminently happy; while the boundaries of his empire were extended on every side,

and were only prevented from encroaching on the Mogul frontier in the north by the slender stream of the Peela-khál, or the yellow river, which intervened to divide the rival kingdoms. The Mogul had promised to be his friend—nay, more, to pay him tribute in token of submission. But these were promises made in the day of trouble, when Báber was a fugitive and an aspirant for honours. Since then Delhi and Ágrá had opened their gates to him and welcomed him in as a conqueror, and he had arrogated to himself the name and consequence of the emperor of Hindustán. Sanga, too, had not rendered to him quite as much assistance as he had promised at the head of his band of outlaws. The promises and engagements on both sides were therefore null and void, and, both parties being equally brave and ambitious, they only waited for some pretext to go to war.

“Father!” asked Sanga of Kurrumchánd, who, having sheltered him in adversity, now shared greatly in his prosperity, “father, should we not try to pull down this aspiring infidel?”

“He sits on the throne of Delhi, my son,” said the old chief, “and it were dangerous to try it.”

“Then, for the danger’s sake, father, the trial should be made.”

“You are born to conquer, my son, and may have your way.”

“Send for Sillaidi. That Tuár is a man of courage, and shall carry my message to the king of Delhi.”

“No, not him,” interposed Kurrumchánd. “I like him not. That fellow, my son, deserves the gibbet.”

“He shall have it, then, in good time; but he is my man for the present business.”

Sillaidi came.

“Well, chief of Rayseen, a bold game is up. Will you scent out our buck for us? Go, carry our message to Báber, and tell him that if he has not forgotten the fall he received in the wilds of Bátorro, Sanga still lives to give him another chance.”

Sillaidi bowed, and went off.

Great was the uproar and confusion in the court of Delhi when intelligence of the challenge was received. The *omráhs* endeavoured to dissuade the emperor from a rash acceptance of it, but Báber was too much of a soldier to remember that he was a sovereign. At the head of a large army, he approached Bianá, the confines of Sanga's empire. The Rájput army drew out also, as strong in number and in discipline. For a time the two armies stood fronting each other, Sanga anxiously awaiting the return of Sillaidi. But no Sillaidi returned. An *omráh* of rank from the Moslem host brought back word from Báber that Sanga's challenge was accepted; and immediately after the once ex-king of Fergháná, now blazing with imperial splendours, alighted from his horse, and advanced forward to meet him.

"King of Mewár, I am glad that thou hast called me out," said the Mogul monarch. "Báber has not yet forgotten the fall he received from thee."

"The fall which the ex-king of Fergháná received was trivial to what is reserved for the conqueror of Delhi," said the fiery Rájput.

"Deeds, not words, must show," answered Báber, and immediately assailed his antagonist.

Hand to hand they fought with implacable fury, and the two armies stood gazing at the sight. The contest was fierce, and for a time doubtful, till one strong sabre-stroke brought great Báber to the ground. A cry of horror rose from the Mahomedan ranks, and a few of the foremost Mahomedan officers rushed upon Sanga, clamouring for revenge. This the Rájputs of course could not calmly look on. They were madly excited, and bounded forward like devils to the charge. Not content with extricating their king from his perilous position, they fell upon the foe with the ferocity of tigers. The Moguls, already vanquished in spirit by the overthrow of their king, could offer no adequate resistance, and fled; and

Báber, who had been stunned, not killed, felt humbled by the defeat.

Great was the rejoicing in the Rájput camp. They received their invincible Ráná with welcome arms. Proportionate was the gloom in the camp of the Moguls. Báber did all that a great general could do to alleviate the miseries of defeat; but when his *omráhs* advised his return to Delhi, he answered calmly but resolutely, "Never, unless I return in triumph." Preparations were now made for another great effort; and that this effort was to be very great was easily to be understood from the deep thought and loneliness in which the emperor passed his hours. For a time his ideas found no vent, till one morning he came to the tent of Sillaidi. The Tuár was yet in bed, but arose immediately to receive his august visitor.

"Well, Sillaidi," said Báber, cutting short his fawning and flattery, "have you no advice to give me how to capture your former master?"

"Yes, my liege. Have I not often told you that he wears a charm around his neck which ensures victory to his arms?"

Báber smiled.

"Smile, great king, but till that is taken from him, Sanga is Sanga, invincible in arms."

"Well, take it yourself then. Why don't you help me if you can?"

"I will," said Sillaidi.

In the pellucid waters of the Peelakhál, apart from all other people, Sanga delighted to perform the ablutions enjoined by his religion. Day after day the king was to be seen bathing in the stream. The charm, which he carried round his neck, he always left on the bank, resuming it as soon as his lustrations were over. One day however, while he had dipped under the water, it was gone. Who could have taken it? There was no human being to be seen so far as the eye commanded the prospect. The rájáh looked upwards, and behold! there was a carrier-

pigeon in the air, mounting with the precious burthen. Hastily leaving the river, he took up his bow to bring down the bird; but a voice from the clouds said,—“Sanga, thy hour is gone;” and the pigeon was lost in their gloom.

Great was the consternation of Sanga at the loss of the charm, and it became greater still when intelligence was brought to him that the Moguls were approaching, ready to give him battle. While he was thinking how to act, Sillaidi entered his tent, exclaiming, “My king! my noble master! haste, for the enemy is near.”

“Let him come,” said the king, “Sanga was never unprepared to meet his foe. But speak, Sillaidi, comest thou as a friend or as a traitor?”

“Oh, noble master, when was Sillaidi aught but thy vassal and thy friend! The barbarous Moslem kept me in durance, and I could not return till now, when, taking advantage of an hour of confusion, I have escaped to join my king.”

“Lead the van then,” said Sanga; “I commit my fortune to thy hands.”

Here Kurrumchánd interposed. In audible whispers he told the king that the Tuár was not to be trusted; but in vain. The loss of the charm had affected the Ráná’s reason, and he would not hear him. The consequence was the early defection of the traitor and Sanga’s defeat. The Tuár went over to the enemy just when the daring onset of the Rájpoos promised Sanga a glorious victory. The tide of war was instantly turned; and, in spite of many personal feats of valour, Sanga and the noblest of his followers were compelled to retreat.

The choicest warriors of both armies lay on the field stiff and cold, and even the victor turned from it his restless eyes.

“Let us push on,” said Sillaidi, “and the kingdom of Mewár will own thee as its lord.”

“Not while Sanga lives,” said the well-judging warrior.

"I would not wish such another victory for the empire of the world."

Báber respected and dreaded his foe.

"Dost thou not wish him dead?" asked Sillaidi.

"That were an evil wish at best; but I do wish there were no Sanga to thwart my arms."

"Then count on thy foeman as living no more."

"Traitor, you dare not kill him! I will have thee quartered on the gibbet if thou takest him off unfairly."

"And why should Báber interfere between me and my enemy? Have I betrayed him for thee? Who art thou that I should serve thee so? What canst thou do to elevate the chief of Rayseen? No, king of the Moguls, Sillaidi seeks his vengeance without consulting the whims of kings. When Sanga is no more, then thou wilt thank me."

Sillaidi left the presence; half-a-dozen *sowars* were sent after him, but he outstripped them all. Whither he went was never known; nor was he ever seen again. But a few days after great Sanga died—not without suspicion of having been poisoned. Who administered the poison, and how it was administered, was never revealed; nor, if Sillaidi was concerned in the business, was it discovered what grudge the Tuár bore to the king, except that Sillaidi's disappointed love for Meerá Bye has been hinted at by historians.

THE FLIGHT OF HUMÁYUN.

THE night was dark and gloomy, there was no moon in the sky, and the stars were few and shone with faint lustre. "I never remember so dark a night," said the foremost of a party of travellers who were on their way from Jodhpore towards the castle of Amerkote. "Spur on, spur on; I pray to God that a bright morrow may

dawn upon us after such a dismal night." This was said with a sigh, for a vast desert lay between them and the nearest place of refuge; and the travellers were jaded, weary, and heavy laden.

"And where shall we next beg for safety and shelter, my lord? The wilderness before us seems to have no end, and the door of the stranger will not open to him who is deserted even by his friends," said a plaintive female voice in accents of great distress.

"Hamidá," answered the first speaker, "cheer up, my dearest. The God who forsook not the Egyptian mother when driven forth from the tent of Abraham, will guide us to a place of safety. He who rained down manna for the wanderers of the wilderness, will not forget our wants, nor suffer us to perish." Hamidá spoke not, but raising her eyes to Heaven, prayed inwardly for strength; and her Maker heard and strengthened her, and they rode on. In the rear of the party, nothing was heard but screams and lamentations, and dreadful oaths from those who had yet vigour to utter them.

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"Nidim Kóká," said Tirdi Beg, "how fares my pretty cousin in this close atmosphere?"

"Why, well," answered Nidim, "as well as a queen."

"Hush! hush! I wish I had that churl Máldeo within an arm's length of my fist; I would have taught him then how to treat a king: by God I would."

"Swear not!" said a voice from the foremost ranks; "who and what is Máldeo that you think he could have helped us when it is the will of Heaven that we should suffer. Trust in God alone, not in man."

This severe rebuke hushed Tirdi Beg; but he resumed his conversation with Nidim soon after in an under-tone, speaking principally of the latter's daughter Zedá, a beautiful girl who served as handmaid to the queen. Tirdi Beg was a soldier of fortune, and stricken to the heart by the fair offshoot of Kóká, had paid his addresses to her; but Zedá returned not his love.

"Where is Zedá?" asked Tirdi Beg.

"Where she should be," replied her father; "with her mother, or with the queen, I suppose."

"Not with the queen," said Tirdi Beg; "though the night be dark you can see that plain enough."

"Then where is she?" exclaimed the father in alarm; "her mother I see moves alone. We must seek her out; perhaps she may have sunk under her troubles."

"Merciful Heavens!" exclaimed the mother at the same time, "where is Zedá?"

Tirdi Beg and Nidim Koká, with lighted torches in their hands, passed to seek for her towards the rear; but she was not there. Proceeding a little further however, they saw her standing before a young man, who was on his knees and was clasping her hands. The stranger rose on finding that they were perceived; but still remained at her side, as if loath to leave her.

"Say but the word, Zedá," he urged, "and I am thine for ever. The king is safe; I will never betray him. Oh! say you are mine."

"No, Chunder Sen. I cannot say that word. This day your father has refused my master and mistress, me and my parents, a shelter, and Zedá will never wed the son of such an enemy."

"But why shouldst thou cast me off for a fault that is not mine? Oh Zedá, if thou hadst truly loved me thou couldst not have rejected me so coldly."

"Not love thee! How I have loved thee, how I love thee still, God only knoweth. But enough. See they are near."

"Let them come. Part life if I must part with Zedá."

Tirdi Beg and Nidim Koká now came up to the youthful pair. Zedá ran for support to her father, for support she needed; while Tirdi could not help approaching his rival, for such evidently the stranger appeared to be, with a menacing air.

"Who art thou, youngster, that thus detainest maidens.

from their friends without warranty and against their will ? ”

“ Who art thou,” demanded the unknown, “ that darest to wag thy tongue at me ? ”

“ One that will teach thee manners, my malapert youth,” was the reply. “ Thy assignation has given me some trouble, and may I be blasted if I don’t punish thee for it.” He essayed to take his rival by the throat ; but a violent blow laid him rolling on the sand, and, ere he could rise, the stranger was gone.

Nidim Koká had up to this time remained silent. He had of late observed the marks of care on his daughter’s brow, and he knew or guessed them to be the cares of love. But who the object of her affection was had hitherto been unknown to him ; nor did he know what obstacles crossed her attachment.

“ Zedá, my love ! ” said he now, taking her kindly by the hand, “ a father has a right to know who the youth is from whom you have just parted.”

“ And you shall know it, father,” was the reply of the guileless girl. “ The youth who has stolen your Zedá’s heart is Máldeo’s heir.”

“ Máldeo’s son ! Great Heavens ! why am I so sorely tried. And Zedá wilt thou wed the young traitor ? ”

“ Never ! ” answered the maiden resolutely, but the tears filled her eyes. Nidim Koká blessed his faithful child.

Day dawned on the desert after a night of horrors. It were vain attempting to describe the miseries undergone by the unhappy fugitives. Hardships of the most appalling character had been passed over ; but greater horrors yet awaited them. Their provisions, strengthened by no extraordinary supply since the emperor left Ágrá, now began to fail ; and hundreds dropt down on the road from over-exertion and lack of food. The want of water was still more severely felt. For three long days and nights they had discovered no well in that sandy region ; and their parched lips were bursting for want of moisture.

Every moment added numbers to the dead ; and thousands rolled in agony on the hot sands, and so awaited their end.

Nor did the king undergo less privations than his faithful followers. On the contrary he suffered more than most of them. His horse fell down dead with fatigue ; and for a long while he prosecuted his journey on foot, for so low was royalty fallen that he did not dare to ask any of his followers to give up his steed to him. Nay, it is said, one refused to surrender his animal when the king did ask for it, whereupon Nidim Koká cheerfully gave up the one he rode upon, and ran on foot by the emperor's side. But of all others the miseries endured by the queen were the most severe and unbearable. She was in an advanced state of pregnancy, and already felt the throes which told her that she must soon become a mother. In this weak and peculiar condition, she was compelled to move forward at a rate which at any time would have been felt by one habituated to the luxuries of an oriental *hárem*.

Such were the horrors of the flight when morning dawned on the imperial fugitives. But a new day seemed to bring with it only fresh disasters to complete the sum of their misfortunes. With the first streaks of dawn they perceived a considerable body of horse in their rear, and they were not long in finding out that the party was commanded by an Afghán high in Shere Sháh's favour. Knowing that a battle must quickly ensue, Humáyun collected as many of his warriors together as he could muster, and calmly awaited the approach of the enemy. He had only a handful of men, but he was determined not to yield without an effort, and quietly awaited the approach of his pursuers, who loudly and fiercely called upon him to surrender. At this juncture, a body of Rájpoor soldiers rushed down from another direction to the aid of the fugitive king ; and clapping their hands, and raising their war-cry, they fell upon the Moslems with such vigour, that they carried

everything before them. The general of Shere Sháh did all he could, but was unable to withstand the hurricane onset of the wild children of Rájwárrá, and was soon too glad to run away.

The king sat beside a well which had been found that morning, with his queen Hamidá Bánu at his side, when Nidim Koká came forward to give him an account of the fight.

"And who were the Rájpoos who befriended our poor cause?" demanded Humáyun, the tears of gratitude glistening in his eyes.

"Brave sons of the desert, my lord, who always side with the weak!" answered Nidim.

"And what may be their leader's name?" inquired the king. Nidim did not answer. "Speak Nidim, that thy king may thank him. He has nothing but thanks now to offer."

"And those the Rájpoos' chieftain does not deserve, though his people do. It was Chunder Sen, the traitor Máldeo's son, who, perhaps to help some double purpose of his infamous father, came here to fight our enemies."

Humáyun was silent for a time, then revolving the incident in his mind, he turned again to Nidim for information.

"Hast thou no further information, Nidim, to clear up the mystery? It seems very strange indeed, that Máldeo's son should venture in our aid after his father's refusal to give us shelter in his fortress. Perhaps there is among us some friend, some Damon with whom this young man is in friendship bound, or some sweet nymph whose bright eyes have bewitched him. I think woman must be at the bottom of the matter, or he would not have risked his father's displeasure to help us."

Nidim found it no longer right to withhold the secret from his master. "Gracious liege, my daughter Zedá loves this youth, and is very much beloved by him."

"Ah! I thought as much. But if they love truly,* to make the story consistent, the course of true love must have been crossed."

"Aye, sovereign of the world, it has been crossed. Máldeo's conduct towards your majesty has done it. My daughter Zedá has given me her word that she will never wed a traitor's son."

"She shall, she must do it, that is, if she respects her sovereign's pleasure. I see no reason why a loving couple should be unhappy because Máldeo chooses to be churlish. Send Zedá to us, and bid Chunder Sen repair hither to receive our thanks."

They brought the young son of Máldeo before the fugitive emperor, and he courteously seated him on his right. He thanked him for the service rendered by him, and asked him to name his reward.

"But no," said Humáyun, as if recollecting himself; "I must not reward a traitor's son. Humáyun decrees unto the son of Máldeo a gaoler for life."

The youthful Rájput heard the words of the powerless Mogul with astonishment; but great was his pleasure, when the emperor, calling the beautiful and blushing Zedá to his side, united their hands together. Chunder Sen knelt before his gracious sovereign, and vowed to cover his retreat with his life. He supplied the party with food and water, and accompanied them till they came up to Amerkote. Here there was a dead halt. They could not proceed further. The rájá of Amerkote at last took compassion on the unheard of distress of the royal fugitive; and he spared nothing to alleviate his misery. In this oasis of an Indian desert, Akbar first saw the light; and, on the same day on which Hamidá Bánú was delivered of her son, was married the beautiful Zedá to the prince of Márwár, who became a Mahomedan. Humáyun was still a fugitive—the diadem of India was yet on another brow; but he blessed God fervently for deliverance from starvation and death.

THE FATAL SCROLL.

MÁLDEO, rájáh of Márwár, was the most potent Hindu prince of his age. He is represented by his historians to have been a man of an enlarged mind, uncommon personal courage, and great decision of character ; but he had also the disadvantages of a haughty and overbearing spirit, and evinced at times an exceedingly suspicious disposition. In person he was of gigantic stature ; and his countenance was so singularly marked and imposing, that it is said, that on one occasion, an assassin was deterred from killing him by its awful expression even in sleep.

In a spacious and lofty room in his own castle of Jodhpore, Máldeo sat alone, his head reclining on his hand, his brow strongly knit, and his eyes intently fixed upon a small letter which he must have read at least twenty times over. This letter was from Humáyun, the son of Báber, who, driven from the throne of Delhi by a lieutenant, was now wandering over the desert, and had earnestly besought his protection. Máldeo was well disposed to relieve and give shelter to the imperial fugitive ; but the tears of Chundrávati prevented him from performing this neighbourly duty. On that memorable day when the illustrious Sanga lost the battle of Bianá, fell Kumára, the eldest son of Máldeo, fighting bravely against the Chagatai. All the grief of Chundrávati for her first-born was revived when the name of Humáyun was mentioned in the palace, and she beseechingly importuned her husband to refuse the protection asked for by the unfortunate monarch. Máldeo loved the mother of his children, and was greatly distressed to see her grief. The name of the Chagatai, in fortune or in flight, had no claims on his regard. The unfortunate Humáyun was therefore denied admittance into Jodhpore, and compelled to continue his dreary journey, till he found refuge at last in the castle of Amerkote.

But though he had refused the ex-emperor of Delhi the

shelter he had sought, Máldeo could not help pitying his misfortunes; and he read and re-read his letter several times over, pondering on the instability of human greatness and the vanity and nothingness of life. "The ways of Heaven are inscrutable," he exclaimed. "We see the high cast down, and the low lifted up in their place, without understanding the *why* and the *wherefore* of it. But surely, all is, or should be, for the best." And he arose and cast open the window, as if he wanted a little fresh air to recover his spirits.

A noise in the distance, as of the prancing of horses, was now heard, and shortly after he saw a small cavalcade of Moslems making towards the castle. These were announced as messengers from the usurper Shere, who upon hearing that Humáyun had applied in vain for the protection of the powerful rájáh of Márwár, had lost no time in sending his thanks to the court of Rájwárrá for the courtesy shown to him, with an offer to cement an alliance with his potent neighbour, by marrying his youngest son Selim to Mriganoyáni, or the gazelle-eyed, one of the daughters of the desert king. But Shere had entirely mistaken the character of the Rájpoot. Máldeo received the messengers of the Afghán with cold disdain. It was not to please Shere, he said, that he had refused protection and shelter to Humáyun, and no thanks were therefore due to him on that account; and as for the alliance proposed, coming from a nameless adventurer and an usurper, he could not but receive the proposal as an insult. The messengers in short, were dismissed with disgrace as quickly as they came; and Poorun, the accepted lover of Mriganoyáni, sent by them to Selim the measure of his sword, which in Rájwárrá is still regarded as a challenge and message of defiance.

Great was the wrath of Shere Sháh when his insulted messengers came back to Delhi; but he did not give vent to his feelings.

"Máldeo is a great warrior," said he, with a smile, "but let him keep sharp eyes about him, for we shall come to

him ;" and the incident was allowed to pass for the time without further comment.

Within a few months after Shere Sháh entered the inhospitable desert of Márwár at the head of eighty thousand men ; but, if he expected to take Máldéo by surprise, he was greatly disappointed. After traversing an arid plain, and encountering all the privations of such a march, the Mogul army came before an enemy well-prepared to receive them. The rájáh of Márwár had collected together a smaller but well-disciplined force, and the judgment and caution with which he regulated his movements showed to Shere Sháh that he had no common adversary to deal with. At every step the Afghán was compelled to fortify his camp ; and he very soon began to repent of his rashness in having come out so far on what appeared to be a bootless errand, and would even have been glad to retire, if he could have done so without disaster and disgrace.

It was about half an hour before dawn, and not a sound, save the occasional snort of an impatient steed, disturbed the quietness that reigned throughout the Rájput lines. Picketed in rows, the gallant chargers of the cavalry were yet dosing away their hours, while the troopers themselves were either sleeping in their tents, or had just arisen and were smoking their *chillums*. There were two persons, however, strolling through the lines even at that early hour. One was a brawny and powerful man, whose high features and terrific countenance at once betrayed the king. The other was a young recruit, who followed the steps of his master closely, and conversed with him as they passed along. At this moment a dark object was seen galloping towards the camp. This was perceived and pointed out by the young recruit.

" Good ! " said the rájáh, whose brow became at once contracted and stern. " Thou hast a quick eye. Now go and ascertain who that is. It is a spy, I think. If it be so, take care that he does not escape thee."

Three-quarters of an hour elapsed before the messenger of the king came back, and the king almost started from his seat on seeing him return alone.

"Where is thy prisoner, knave?" was the only question he vouchsafed to ask him.

"Pardon, king! he has escaped me," replied the recruit, after a moment's hesitation, while the sweat broke out on his forehead as he clearly read 'death' on Máldeo's countenance.

"Who waits?" exclaimed the king, and an officer coming in, he turned to him and said,—“Let this wretch be taken to the rear, and hanged on the nearest tree.”

The lips of the young recruit quivered nervously, but he did not or could not speak. He bent low, and handed to the king a bit of paper, and then quietly awaited his fate. A gleam of satisfaction passed over Máldeo's face as he read that scroll, and that was succeeded by a look of thunder.

"Poor devil!" he at last said to himself; "he has done all he could, and it were hard to punish him for what he could not do." He then clapped his hands to call the nearest officer in waiting, and told him to set the prisoner free.

A buzz of satisfaction filled the tent as the young recruit was set at large; but Máldeo retired to his innermost pavilion with a stern and contracted brow.

* * * * *

It was high noon, and Máldeo sat surrounded by as gallant a band of Rájputs as ever drew swords. He had assembled a council of war, and a discussion was being vehemently carried on as to whether an engagement should be risked at once or delayed. Almost all his best generals were for an immediate onset; but Máldeo, grim and unmoved, urged grave doubts of success. No one had expected opposition on such grounds from the fearless old veteran, and they demanded his reasons for the doubts he entertained. The king answered them with a hollow laugh, and at the same time flung an open letter in the

midst of them. It was taken up by Koombha, one of his principal advisers, and a deep frown gathered on his brow as he read its mischievous contents. The letter purported to be one from the chief officers of the Márwár army, and was addressed to Shere Sháh as emperor of Delhi. It set forth in strong language the existence of a general feeling of dissatisfaction and personal hostility among the writers towards Máldeo as a king; and this statement was coupled with an offer to desert him and the national cause, if Shere would only confirm the writers in their existing rights and privileges. The whole concluded with a superscription in Shere Shah's own handwriting, accepting the offer on the conditions proposed.

"This is a miserable stratagem," said Koombha, as he laid down the document, "and Máldeo should have seen through it. Comrades, it is now too late to expect a victory, for Máldeo still suspects, and will not fight with us. But our character is questioned; we can clear it with our lives."

How well they fought has been witnessed by Shere himself. "For a handful of barley," said he—meaning their unproductive country—"I had nearly given the empire of Hindustán to the winds."

THE NO-ROZE.

It was a bright sunny morning, and the little village of Jakondáh, so clean and pleasant, with its fields and meadows bespeaking peace and plenty, lay basking in the genial beams of the sun. But its streets bespoke rather more than ordinary tranquillity on that day. Instead of being thronged with cheerful and industrious villagers, as usual, they appeared to be entirely deserted, and there was an air of loneliness all around, remarkable even to a stranger. One such had just entered the village, and was

walking up and down the principal street. Perhaps he was not quite a stranger to the spot; but, if so, he looked like one who had been long away from it. The houses were all shut up, the market-place quite solitary, and the man seemed to be much perplexed what to do. He sought for certain people there who were not to be found. At last, with the confident strides of a man who had taken a sudden resolution, he walked straight towards the largest shop, which partook of the nature of an inn, having ample accommodation for strangers. Even this was empty—empty of company, and also of the shop-keeper and his family. There was only one servant-girl present to bid comers welcome, and the traveller looked quite embarrassed when he found himself her only guest.

“Well, a buxom wench is not bad company to lodge with, after all,” muttered the man to himself, as he entered the place, determined to make himself comfortable in spite of the solitariness around him. The woman was far from being shy. She received her guest with titters, conducted him to a good, comfortable seat, and said to him cheeringly,—“Come, don’t be down-hearted, my man. We shall have merry times soon again, though the village looks so cold now.”

“And why does it look so cold and lone then?” asked her guest; “has the cholera been here, or the plague, or has it been interdicted by the emperor’s ban?”

The maid looked at the face of the traveller in earnest surprise, her countenance then brightened, and at last she burst into a smile.

“From what part of the country are you come, my friend, that you have not heard of the great festival the king holds at Delhi? To-morrow will be the No-roze, the crowning day of the feast, and from twenty miles around the capital the population has flocked thither to witness its celebration.”

“Ah! is that it?” said the traveller, striking his forehead with his forefinger. “Well, I must be there too, in time;” and he rose as if to depart at once.

But the girl would not allow him to stir, and seized him by the arm to detain him. "We have had no guests here to-day," she said; "there is plenty of food cooked and ready; and you must be both hungry and thirsty. First eat your fill, and I will do the same; and then we shall go to see the celebration together."

"Good," said the stranger, and he sat down to satisfy his appetite; and when eating and joking were over, the pair left the village together to repair to Delhi, laughing cheerfully all the way.

The road from Jákondáh to Delhi was a short one, but it was well-thronged; and, jostling and jostled, the two were hurried along the tide of life, till they found themselves within the city, in the midst of a most formidable group of housewives, citizens, strangers, and squeaking and hungry-looking children. This was the *khoosroz*, or the day of pleasure. The No-roze, or vernal equinox, was held in particular veneration by Akbar; and a rich and fashionable ball at night always terminated the pleasures of the day. The emperor had issued invitations to his immense circle of friends and dependents, and had spared no pains to collect around him all that was distinguished and fashionable throughout the land. The court was thronged by great Mahomedan grandees and diplomatists; the vassal-princes of Rájasthán were there; and many a stiff-necked Rájpoor, who owned no fealty to the monarch's power, also graced the heterogeneous assemblage with his presence. If the streets were thronged by a less distinguished crowd, their enjoyment was not less genial or animated. The entertainments for the day had been arranged on the largest scale. The most gorgeous display of oriental magnificence had been made on the highways, and splendid saloons were opened on each side of them, which were appropriated either to dancing or refreshment. The most delicate dishes and *sherbets* were served out to the hungry; and an unceasing concert of music was kept up for the entertainment of the passing crowd at every corner and turn of

the road. To give variety to the enjoyment, jugglers performed their ingenious tricks at convenient distances, and here and there theatres were set up for fantastical representations. This for the mass.

To please his nobler guests, the palace of the emperor was decorated in a style of extraordinary luxuriance. The apartments were skilfully adorned, so as to represent different scenes from fairy land; and wealth and taste were both lavishly displayed in everything about them. There was dancing and song also in many of them; and it was really a day of pleasure in the capital of Mahomedan India.

That women also might have their measure of enjoyment, a market was held within the *mehal* by females; where the wives of the *omráhs* and native grandees and the ladies of the emperor's *hárem* bought and sold, and laughed and sung. This peculiar entertainment had been designed to please the particular taste of one of the emperor's especial favourites; and Akbar had himself too shown an unaccountable predilection in its favour. In this within-door market were exposed for sale manufactures of every clime, glittering jewels from Golcondá, rich brocades from Benáres, coloured silks and muslins, plumes and coronets, and a rich and pleasing variety of like articles. A more pleasing variety of sellers and purchasers also were assembled there. The sonorous *Pushtoo*, sounded from the prettiest Mahomedan lips, blended into a delicious jargon with the softer *Brojobháká*, spoken by the fair dames of Rájwárrá; and bright eyes and sunny glances almost made an Eden of the fair.

The crowd in the streets was immense; so large and numerous that it frequently impeded the progress of our hero, shackled as he was with the company of a woman. He had made his appearance rather late on the scene, yet seemed to be in much haste to look at all the good sights; and he used his elbows rather too vigorously for an occasion so festive. The throng, however, regarded not his rudeness. They were too intent in pursuing their amuse-

ments to mind an occasional hit on the ribs; and the rapid movement of the pair soon brought them to the palace-gate. Here the traveller came to a dead stop. The shop-girl wondered exceedingly at this sudden halt, but her companion explained it himself before she could ask him.

"There, my pretty girl, is the harem-gate, paved with a mosaic of divers-coloured stones. The entrance is open to your sex, and within are brilliant entertainments to please the fair. Go in and enjoy them, and leave me to manage myself in the streets as well as I can."

He paused a moment, leaned his head on his hand, and seemed unwilling to proceed; but he resumed his directions shortly again in a lower voice.

"You will see within a beautiful girl of our race, with raven curls and laughing eyes, gay and lively, and dressed like a queen. You cannot mistake her. She has a mole on her right cheek, wears a necklace of diamonds too rich to find a rival, and on her finger is a topaz-ring. Dog her footsteps, but give her no offence; and, if you report to me faithfully of her doings, I will reward you handsomely."

"But who is she, what is her name, why should her doings concern you or me?" asked the curious serving-maid.

"Enough, enough," said the traveller; "all that you will know in time. Now to your task, my girl. Here is earnest-money for your labours;" and he handed her a brace of golden coins, and disappeared in the crowd.

As the stranger perhaps had anticipated, the inducement to proceed on the business assigned her was too strong for a female of the servant class to resist. First of all the duty imposed was a pleasing one, namely, to play the spy over one of her own sex; next, it had been assigned to her by a handsome, good-looking youth, who might love her all the more for her pains; and, lastly, the guerdon for her troubles, already paid for in part, promised to be exceedingly handsome. She stood still for a

moment, but it was only 'for a moment. "I will do it," said she to herself, and ran towards the *hárem*-gate.

Getting in by that gate, however, was no easy task, for multitudes of her sex were coming out of it. For common women the out-of-door amusements were greater than those within; and though curiosity drew them all once into the *hárem*, for the first time open to public intrusion, they lost no time in flying out. It was, therefore, not till after much toil and jostling that she was able to get in. The magnificence that here met her eyes was quite bewildering. History and romance had been ransacked for scenes worthy of the gorgeous apartments; and coloured-glass illuminations threw over them a wild and charm-enhancing light. The market was a pretty conceit; and the articles were arranged on rich porphyry basins supported on sculptured pedestals. For a few moments our little spy stood silently gazing at the richness and beauty of the vast design. But she was soon reminded of the task imposed on her, for a bevy of frank and joyous women passed by her that moment, sparkling with laughter, gems, and gold.

Many handsome women were met with in the *hárem*, but the shop-girl found no difficulty in finding out the woman she wanted. Of all the Rájpoornis gathered there she was the fairest; and in magnificence and show she was scarcely inferior to the favourites of the emperor themselves. Her necklace of diamonds was perhaps the costliest jewel worn by any one, and her topaz-ring was unmissable. Nor was the serving-maid long kept in ignorance of her name, though her employer had not considered it desirable to intrust her with it. The woman whose movements she had been engaged to watch was Jayá, the daughter of Suktá, and the wife of Prithuráj.

Mewár was the land of beauty and chivalry with the ancient Rájpoorts. Many are the stirring tales with which its name is connected, and many were the extraordinary beauties to whom it gave birth. Jayá was justly counted

one amongst the latter. She was gay, graceful, and fair; and of her day she was one of the loveliest women in Hindustán. Her beauty a few years before had been the theme of universal praise; and her wit, spirit, and vivacity had drawn around her such a lordly throng of suitors as Helen herself might have envied. The proudest princes of the Seesodiá race had sought her hand; and Akbar, then a prince, had asked the founder of the Suktáwats to give unto him his daughter. But the father of Jayá had left it entirely to his child to select her mate for life; and she had preferred a soldier of fortune, a portionless prince of Bikáneer. Prithu was the lover of her choice. He was brave and handsome, and well-to-do in life; and to these he added the great and crowning qualification of having talents enough to write sonnets on his mistress' eyebrows.

The partiality of Jayá had not displeased her father. The prince Akbar had since become emperor, and an emperor too of great name. Yet was not Suktá anxious to mingle his blood with that of a Mahomedan.

"God bless you, my child," said he to her, when she explicitly requested him to send the emperor of Delhi a denial. "God bless you, my child, for that word. You would have broken my heart for ever if you had chosen the Toork;" and all Mewár praised her discretion and courage, for much her countrymen had feared to lose her from amongst them. Even the discomfited suitors of her own race, though mortified by the preference shown by her for Prithu, admired the maiden warmly for the refusal she had given to the Moslem; and all sincerely wished her the happiness she so well deserved.

When answer was received at the court of Delhi that the hand and heart of Jayá were not in her gift, and that the emperor's application had come too late (for thus did the cautious father smooth down the harshness of his daughter's reply,) the mortification of Akbar knew no bounds. A lover is always unreasonable when refused; and royal lovers are more so than ordinary ones. When the emperor therefore heard soon after that the accom-

plished Rájpootni had thrown herself away on a soldier of fortune, his chagrin knew no bounds. But he could control his passions well; if not from the natural greatness of his soul, at least from policy. His vexation and wrath were suppressed; and to all appearances his love was entirely forgotten.

Years passed away; but passing years only added greatness to the name of Akbar. His intercourse with the Rájpoots increased day by day. There were some who opposed his might on the field; but such were few. The greatest amongst them was Pratáp, the brother of Suktá, of whom Colonel Tod records that "there is not a pass in the Alpine Arávulli that is not sanctified by some of his brilliant victories, or oftener his more glorious defeats;" and that his name and exploits can never be forgotten "while a Seesodiá occupies Mewár, or a bard survives to relate the tale." The fortunes of Suktá and Pratáp were very different. The first had quarrelled with his brother, and become a traitor to the national cause; and he was opposed by the wily Mogul to his own brother, and his kin in faith and blood. Prithu, reduced by the chances of war, had also been compelled to enlist under the conqueror. But we must return to our tale.

The servant-girl set to watch over her, haunted the footsteps of Jayá as her very shadow, and yet not in a manner to give offence. The vast company around the Rájpootni began gradually to melt and vanish, and now she was to be seen moving alone. Where a fanciful garden had been devised, and trees and shrubs of remarkable beauty were arranged in labyrinthine mazes, she turned her steps. The light here was not very profuse, but seemed rather like a twilight as compared with the broader glare of other apartments; but Jayá being engrossed with the interesting sights before her did not notice the difference, and her pursuer was as intensely occupied with the direction of her steps. At this moment a third female entered the place—a big-made, awkward woman, who almost unceremoniously took her stand close to the fair Rájpootni.

Jayá, to avoid her, moved away to where, within a circle of osier-wands and briars, some tempting roses displayed their charms, breathing the softest odours. Without any effort to conceal her incivility the ugly woman followed her thither. Then Jayá struck into another path, and sauntered back towards the ball-room, where amidst a brilliant throng she expected to get rid of her pursuer. But in this she was disappointed, as, without any affectation of delicacy, nay often with an ill-disguised impatience, the big lady was always after her, or at her side. Wherever moved the beautiful and light steps of Jayá, there, as her good or evil angel, moved the officious attendant; and the fair Rájapootni often felt provoked to inquire why her movements were so dogged. But, before having recourse to this unpleasant alternative, she determined to make one last effort to elude the vigilance of her pursuer. With hurried and almost precipitate steps she took her way towards the loneliest and most intricate apartments of the *mehal*, thinking that there the intruder could have no excuse to follow her; and to her delight it seemed as if the pursuit was abandoned. The awkward female had struck into another path; and Jayá was just about to congratulate herself on her deliverance from her intrusive persecution, when suddenly, from the door nearest to her, issued, like an apparition, the object of her disgust. The enraged Rájapootni could tolerate the impertinence no longer.

"Who art thou that doggest me thus?" she demanded of her uncivil pursuer; "and wherefore dost thou follow me?"

"I am thy slave, most beautiful of women," answered a hoarse, deep, and manly voice; and the emperor dropt his disguise.

Jayá had not expected such strange behaviour from Akbar, and her agitation was great. But in her lover's eyes this only served to heighten her charms. He approached nearer to the siren who had stolen his heart; and, to crown his boldness, took her by

the hand. The noble-minded Rájputni could bear no more.

"Unhand me, villain!" she cried in wrath; and, suiting her courage to her words, drew out a poniard from her corset, and held it to his breast. The emperor staggered back a few paces; then, finding the fortress impregnable, sounded his retreat.

Early next morning a litter was seen to pass out from one of the gates of Delhi towards the great road to Rájwárrá. It bore Jayá back to Mewár, the well-beloved land of her birth; and a young soldier on horseback and well-armed escorted it on its way. The service of the emperor was connected with too many disagreeable associations for Prithu not to quit it after the incident mentioned above, and satisfied from the observations of his own spy that the woman he had wedded was in all respects worthy of a soldier's love, he crushed certain jealous feelings that had somehow taken root in his breast, and ever after was all the happier for having done so.

THE GATE OF OMIR SING.

WHY does one of the gates of Ágrá bear the name of Omir Sing? Many of our readers will laugh at the simple question, and perhaps unthinkingly answer, "Because it was built by, or at the wish of, some person of that name." But, if they laugh at us, we shall not hesitate to laugh at them; and the student of history will perceive that we shall have both rhyme and reason on our side.

Omír Sing was a prince of Márwár when Sháh Jehán was emperor of Delhi. He enjoyed the good graces of the emperor, under whom he held offices of importance in the State; and the Mogul sovereign had no servant more faithful than the veteran Ráhtore. Omír was a *munsabadár* of 2000 horse, and in a fair way to rise to

higher dignities. * He was a very proud man, but strict in his principles of honour and virtue.

Omír Sing had a daughter, who was very fair; so fair indeed that a prince of the royal house of Mewár was pining for her hand. A fair daughter has been the innocent cause of much mischief to many a noble father; and Hiranya Bye—such was her name—was destined to mar the prospects of Omír. Shall we blame her for it? She was not to blame.

Among the many friends of Omír Sing at court was one named Sallábut Khán, the paymaster-general of the imperial forces. To him the Ráhtore was indebted for many favourable words poured into the royal ear at the right time, and also for the command of 2000 horse which he held. Omír endeavoured always to repay these obligations with gratitude; and the respect which he showed Sallábut on all occasions fell short only of that rendered to the emperor. But these were empty returns. Sallábut longed for more substantial favours.

One fine morning Omír was enjoying a pleasant stroll in his garden in company with Sallábut Khán. They were talking after their usual manner, on official subjects—principally about preferments and salaries—when, all of a sudden, a damsel, light as a fay, and with a countenance which perhaps had no rival except its own image in the glass, confronted them. It was Omír's daughter. She had expected to find no one there but her father, and meeting Sallábut courtesied, blushed, and looked down.

"Hold up your head, my dear," said Sallábut; "I am your father's old friend; you must not hide your charms from me, my lovely rose. Hold up your head!"

Omír's daughter was the handsomest woman Sallábut had ever seen; and he gazed on her with a steadfastness which from any but her father's friend would have been painful to the modest maiden. She stood her ground however, in silence; while her father smiled with a pleasure he could not suppress. Sallábut becoming garrulous in praise of her beauty, she was at last compelled

to retire ; and, fleet as the antelope, she sprung back towards the house, and sought her most private apartments to hide her blushes.

Days elapsed after this little incident, but Sallábut and Hiranya Bye never met again. It was not that the visits of the paymaster-general to her father became less frequent ; but the maiden became more cautious in her strolls, and avoided him, for she liked him not, or at all events disliked his lavish compliments. While some of the sex are very fond of praise, there are others—and we would fain believe not a few—who feel quite hurt if any particular notice is taken of them. Our young Hiranya was of this latter class.

The absence of his mistress however did not efface the impression she had made on Sallábut's mind. One evening, while Omir was sitting in his library, and quietly smoking his *hookáh*, Sallábut called, not unusually, to pay him a visit. Finding him alone he took a seat by his side, and for sometime they talked only on the common topics of the day. When the conversation came to a halt, Sallábut drew his seat nearer to his friend, and his countenance assumed a gravity which would have alarmed Omir if he had observed it.

"Omír," opened the paymaster-general, "you know me well, you have known me for years."

"Sufficiently long to know that you are my best friend. But what are you driving at ?"

"You have a daughter of a marriageable age, and you wish to see her well-settled in life ?"

"Certainly. Rám Sing of Mewár has been very earnestly soliciting her hand ; but—"

"But, my friend, you must not let him have her. You must bestow her on Sallábut."

"On you ! You marry my daughter ! Why you are joking. Have respect for a father's feelings, man !"

"Joking ?" exclaimed Sallábut. "I was never more serious in my life."

"Then, to be serious, don't think on the subject

again," said the father, in a deliberate but dispassionate tone.

"But, my good friend," said Sallábut, "you will surely not gainsay me without a reason."

"Reason! Must I show reason why I shall not give you my daughter? Why, the reasons are as abundant as the sands in the bed of the Jumná. Look at your face in the mirror, Sallábut. Each hair will talk to you a volume of reasons, if you have a mind to heed them. You are old—"

"I *am* old—passed my fortieth year."

"Your fiftieth, friend, or your appearance is a liar," said the Ráhtore.

"Very well, my fiftieth then; and my hairs also are turning gray. But what of that? Have I not yet as vigorous a constitution as any youngster of five-and-twenty?"

"Go to for an old fool," interrupted the father.

"Fool!" exclaimed Sallábut, in a rage. "Ungrateful wretch! I renounce thee;" and, rising from his seat, he indignantly left the house.

The loss of a friend at court was not a light matter in those days; particularly as the loss of a friend necessarily created an enemy. Omir Sing gradually began to get out of favour; and he was painfully made conscious of this when a quarrel with one of his neighbours, a zemindár of bad repute, was made the pretext for fining him heavily. The pertinacity with which, contrary to the usual custom, this fine was exacted, left no doubt in Omir's mind that it was Sallábut who was annoying him through the intervention of the emperor. But he took no notice of the matter, and bore the disgrace manfully.

Omir still held his *munsabadárship*, which compelled his attendance at the palace on all public occasions. During one of these visits the emperor favoured him with a private conference. He told him that he had heard much of his daughter's beauty, and wished to raise her to the highest dignity—his own imperial bed.

"Your majesty! my life, is in your royal hands," answered Omir; "but I have pledged my honour this morning to a Rájpoor prince to give him my daughter in marriage; and a Ráhtore's honour is dearer to him than his life."

The answer did not suit a despot's ear; but the tone of the Ráhtore damped the emperor's desire, and for the time the suit was given up.

From that day Omir Sing became a stranger to the imperial court. But his absence did not create much notice, if any, and things appeared to go on as usual. The day of Hiranya Bye's marriage meanwhile drew near, and preparations were made for the occasion befitting the rank of the youthful pair. But the Appius of Hindustán had not forgotten his Virginia. His Claudius, Sallábut, had in a hunting excursion found an opportunity to gratify him with a sight of Hiranya Bye; and the charms of the maiden, heightened by all the innocence of virgin modesty, had made deep impression on the heart of the emperor. He resolved to have her regardless of consequences; and therefore prepared to prevent the nuptials which were at hand.

Unconscious of the impending danger, Omir was sitting in his library and looking down on the waters of the Jumná, when a stranger hurriedly entered his apartment, and, leaving a letter before him, departed with equal celerity, without speaking a word. Omir took up the note, and perused it.

"A deep plot is laid for your dishonour," said the writer of the letter. "Your quarters will be attacked to-night, and your daughter carried off. Look sharp." It is already too late."

Omír read the note over and over. Some misgivings arose within his mind; but the more he thought on the subject, the more it occurred to him that the letter was a hoax. Sháh Jehán had never repeated his suit, nor had he ever seen Hiranya Bye, so far as her father knew. It was, therefore, very unlikely, thought Omír, that he

should adopt any such rash and hasty measure as attacking the house of a peaceful subject at night; and, as for Sallábut, he, Omir knew well, would never dare to perpetrate an open outrage unless backed by his sovereign. The letter therefore was quietly laid aside, and no preparations whatever were made to meet the danger of which it gave warning.

The sun went down, and night threw her mantle of gloom over the city of Ágrá and its suburbs. For some time there was the usual noise and confusion in the crowded streets; but, as the night grew older, the hubbub subsided, as the inhabitants retired to rest. The house of Omir Sing was beyond the confines of the city, and, like all the inhabitants of the suburbs, the inmates had retired early, as usual, to their beds; and soon all was hushed without it and within. At the hour of midnight, however, the sleepers were aroused from their slumbers by shouts and noises in the streets. Some of the doors of the Ráhtore's house were forced open; and before any resistance could be made, almost the whole building was in the power of the assailants. Omir Sing had been one of the first risers, and the first thing he did was to go to his daughter's apartment. He found her awakened from her innocent slumber, and trembling with fear. Looking out from the windows he saw the house surrounded by a large body of armed men. Resistance was hopeless; but he determined to defend the apartment with his life.

The doors of Hiranya Bye's apartment were doubly barred, and all the able-bodied retainers of the Ráhtore crowded to defend it. Overwhelming numbers came against them, but still they held their post with desperate valour; and many were the lives which Omir alone sent that night to their account. The resistance was kept up all night. Morning revealed to the assailants other resources. All the doors and windows of the apartment were now simultaneously attacked, and, several of them being burst open, entrance into the sanctuary could no

longer be prevented. Nor, could the unhappy father hinder the capture of his daughter, for some two or three of the foremost assailants laid hold of her at once, and what could he do but look on? She shrieked and struggled in their grasp, and called on him to help her. Maddened beyond endurance he could bear no more.

"I *will* help thee, my girl," said he; "I *will* render thee all the aid now in my power to afford;" and, saying this, he struggled his way up to her, and, with more than Roman firmness, stabbed her to the heart.

Friends and assailants united in raising a cry of horror at the deed; but the unhappy father heeded them not. Breaking his way through them all, he mounted his fleetest charger, and left his polluted residence for ever.

People thought he fled for fear of punishment; but such suspicion did the brave Ráhtore injustice. He hastened towards the palace; and the gate which gave him admittance into the city on that memorable occasion, ever after bore his name.

Nothing had yet transpired at court. The emperor was sitting in his chair of state, with his *omráhs* standing around him, when Omir, with his bloody dagger in his hand, burst into the presence. Breaking his way through the guards and courtiers, he came up with the rapidity of lightning to where Sallábut Khán stood at the foot of the throne, speaking to his sovereign.

"Wretch! it is thy deed!" exclaimed Omir, as he approached and stabbed him. The next blow was aimed at the emperor; but Sháh Jehán had just time to avoid it; and precipitately fled into the *hárem*. "Treason! treason!" was now the cry on every side, and the whole court shone with the glittering of blades. Chilullá, Seid Sállar, and several other noblemen drew their swords. But the blade of the Ráhtore was not idle; and, when he fell, he fell surrounded by heaps of the slain.

THE IMPERIAL MANDATE.

AURUNGZEBE was in the Deccan, and had just brought the sieges of Dowlatabád and Beider to a triumphant conclusion, when a rumour reached the camp of the death of Sháh Jehán. It was a report that blanched the laurels of victory, and chilled the high hopes of the youthful and the bold; and many a stern warrior, though unused to the melting mood, paid to his departed sovereign the homage of a sigh and a tear. But the distress of the bereaved son was of a more fearful character. Not a drop of moisture flowed down his pale and hollow cheeks, and not a word or sigh gave vent to the feelings which oppressed his heart. The crushing weight of the calamity seemed to have choked his power of speech, and for twenty days he kept his pavilion without seeing even his dearest friends. Respect for a grief so sacred withheld his officers from intruding; but they all anxiously waited for the moment when Aurungzebe would summon them to his presence, and afford them an opportunity to offer their consolations.

For twenty days Aurungzebe brooded in secret, without holding any communication with his officers. It was on the morning of the twenty-first day that Rájáh Chuttersál was summoned to attend his prince. The messenger found him in his innermost pavilion bathed in tears and groaning like a child; and it was sometime before he could find a tongue to deliver his errand.

"Who art thou?" fiercely demanded the Rájpoot, when he discovered a spy on his weakness; "who art thou that hast dared to intrude on my privacy?"

"I bring a message from the prince," stammered the foot-boy; then gaining courage, as he observed the announcement clear up the moody front of the warrior, he added, "his highness requests your immediate attendance in his tent."

Chuttersál wiped his eyes and smiled through his tears.

"Thou bringest glad tidings, boy. Here is that which will reward thy pains. Go; I will follow straight."

Chuttersál, rájáh of Boondi, was one of the greatest liege-vassals of the great Mogul; and the distinguished services which he had rendered to the state, obtained for him the vice-royalty of Delhi, which he held nearly throughout the reign of Sháh Jehán. He was strongly attached to the emperor, both by gratitude and a sense of duty; and was alike respected and envied by his brother *omráhs*. As a statesman he was straightforward, and as a soldier among the boldest of the bold; and his power was so great that the princes of the blood often contended with each other in showing him marks of attention. At the time we are writing of, he was serving as a general in the army of Aurungzebe.

When Chuttersál entered the pavilion of the prince, he found him standing by the side of a table, on which was a heap of papers, which he was turning over. His hollow cheeks had become hollower during the period of his seclusion; but there was not the slightest evidence of a single tear having moistened them. In fact, his countenance was in every other respect unchanged, except that, though always hypocritical, it now wore an air of more than usual reserve. But there was little time for indulging in such observations. After the first formal courtesies were over the Rájpoor endeavoured to offer to the prince some consolation for his recent loss, but was cut short in the midst of his lecture with impatience.

"We have mourned enough, my friend, for the dead," said Aurungzebe; "and it is time now to look after our own interests. Tell me, mahárájá, whom you would wish to see seated on the vacant throne."

"Sheko, of course!" said the intrepid Chuttersál, who had not learnt the art of varnishing his sentiments; "the rights of princes are according to the priority of their birth."

The unpalatable truth was harsh to the ear of the ambitious candidate, but he was too great a hypocrite to

give way to ill-temper. "But Sháh Jehán himself was only a younger brother," urged Aurungzebe, with a sinister smile.

"I never approved the murder of Purvez," was the rough answer of the Rájpoot.

"But you swore allegiance to the murderer?"

"Ay, and have ever been faithful to him, for when Purvez ceased to exist, he was next entitled to my loyalty. It was not for me to judge of the crime by which he came to the throne. God will judge of that."

"Then the long and short of it is that you will not help me against my brothers?"

"That I dare not," said the fearless Rájpoot, "as sooner or later I shall have to account for all my deeds. Your highness's pretensions to the throne have not the slightest shadow of justice in them, and the offended majesty of Heaven may never pardon the man who lends himself to such a cause."

Aurungzebe paced his pavilion to and fro in moody silence, biting his lips till they were marked with blood; then, turning abruptly with a contemptuous smile, he said to the rájá, "But, when Aurungzebe sits fast on the throne of Delhi, then your rájáship will not perhaps hesitate to cringe before him?"

The Rájpoot returned the smile with a scornful eye, and coolly replied, "If Chuttersál lives to see that day, Aurungzebe shall live to know that Chuttersál was not born to cringe before mortal man." He turned his back on the prince, and was about leaving the presence.

"Tarry one moment more, if you please," interposed the prince. "We have been friends long, and should not part thus. You do not know the whole secret, I see. You don't know how much I have been ill-used."

"What secrets does your highness allude to? I know no secrets, and do not care to know any."

"The throne," answered Aurungzebe, in a voice in which the conflicting passions of his heart might have

been easily traced, "is not vacant. What say you to that?"

"Long live the emperor Sháh Jehán!" said Chuttersál, with sincere loyalty. "Long live the king of kings! But how comes it that such an ugly rumour has transpired, a rumour that has forced tears even from the most stubborn eyes?"

"The emperor himself first propagated it, I am informed," replied the prince, with a gloomy brow, "and that to test the conduct of his sons:" and Aurungzebe bit his lips again, and paced the pavilion in moody silence, while Chuttersál awaited his further commands. It was not till after he had indulged his ill-humour for some moments that the prince resumed the conversation.

"Under such circumstances," at last said he, "and seeing how ill-used I have been, how would you advise me to act at present?"

"As duty directs," answered the straightforward soldier. "Since you know the truth, and are assured of his majesty's health, take no notice of the rumour, and address your despatches, as heretofore, with love to your father."

"And put up with his suspicions? I have another plan. Soojá and Murád, I hear, are already in arms, and, if I can but gain over only one of them to my cause, I will be strong enough to blast the hopes of Dárá for ever. Believe me, I do not wish to displace my father from the throne, but only to secure the succession to myself."

"Whatever be your object, my lord," answered Chuttersál, "I am unfit to advise in such councils, and with your permission must be allowed to retire." And he accordingly left the pavilion, leaving Aurungzebe in astonishment at his audacity.

Aurungzebe, intent on his own plans of mischief, thought proper to forget the conduct of Chuttersál, till some time after, when intelligence being brought to him one day that the rájáh was making preparations to quit the Deccan, he found himself peremptorily called upon to

assume the prince. The Rájpoor was accordingly sent for. He came as haughty in his demeanour as ever, and yet conceding all the marks of respect which the etiquette of the times demanded.

"Well, rájáh," opened Aurungzebe, "I understand you are about showing the Deccan your heels. What cause compels you to leave us in the lurch, pray?"

"The mandate of the emperor," answered Chuttersál, and handed to Aurungzebe an imperial order summoning him to the presence.

Aurungzebe smiled a bitter smile, tore the document into pieces, and, as he scattered them around him, said, "We countermand the order you have shown us, and you know that your duty as a soldier renders it imperative for you to obey your superior officer."

"As a servant of the throne my first duty demands obedience to the imperial mandate," answered Chuttersál; "and I know not that there is any power that can countermand it, except itself."

Aurungzebe clapped his hands, and a young *omráh*, his aide-de-camp, immediately came in, and with folded arms awaited his pleasure.

"Carry our orders to Munsubádar Johán Khán to surround the encampments of the Boondi rájáh," said Aurungzebe, "and tell him to watch strictly that not a soul may depart."

"And if any attempts should be made to defeat your highness's order?" inquired the youth.

"Instant death to the offender," answered the prince.

The officer bowed and retired, while Aurungzebe turning to the Rájpoor observed, "See what your obstinacy has rendered necessary. Are you not yet convinced that there is a power competent to countermand the emperor's mandate?"

"Your highness has taken much pains to persuade me to that belief, but I trust, I shall yet be able to show that the imperial order still remains uncountermanded."

The encampments of the Boondi rájáh were surrounded.

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by Jehán Khán, as Aurungzebe had directed; but, in the darkness of night, the voice of Chuttersál was heard to call, in deep tones of authority, his devoted vassals to arms; and, e'er the light of morning had touched the far east, he had successfully cut out his way, and was in full march for Delhi. The chase, however, was hotly given; and, when the Rájpoos arrived on the banks of the Nermuddá, there lay before them a dangerous stream swollen by the periodical rains, without a craft to cross over, and behind, an infuriated foe. One moment Chuttersál stood in suspense. The river was wide, but midway was an island, which promised safe footing to the daring swimmer who could commit his fortunes to such a troubled flood. The rájáh spurred his powerful charger, and plunged into the stream, and his brave veterans to a man followed the gallant example. Jehán Khán had come up in time to witness this daring exploit. His followers were about to deliver their fire after the fugitives, but were prevented by their own chief.

"Such bravery was never seen before," said the noble-hearted Jehán, "and it were a shame to insult it;" and he went back to inform Aurungzebe how Chuttersál had carried out the imperial order.

MULHAR RÁO HOLKÁR; A TALE OF THE BATTLE OF PÁNIPUT.

"Who wants the counsel of a goatherd!" said Sudáseo Bháo, when Mulhar Ráo proposed that the action might be delayed.

"A goatherd!" muttered the proud Mahrattá, his eyes flashing fire and rolling scornfully. "Well, chief, your taunt shall be remembered."

Thus was the bravest soldier of the Mahrattá army alienated from the national cause.

Burning with indignation, and impatient for vengeance, Mulhar Ráo left the council of war to brood over the indignity which had been publicly put upon him. He repaired to his tents, where all were in readiness, anxious for the presence of their beloved leader; but the shout with which they hailed him was succeeded by an interval of dead silence. His face was pale with anger, and the joy of the soldiery cowered, as if instinctively, before the passion of their chief.

"We do not fight with a willing heart to-day," said the leader; "be ready, therefore, to leave the field when I should wish it." It was a chilling announcement to the young and the brave, but every soldier bowed with silent acquiescence.

Who has not read of the disastrous battle of Pánuiput—that bloody engagement, which, at one fell stroke, shattered the colossal fabric of Mahrattá greatness? Many were the hearts that awaited with impatient anxiety the issue of that well-fought contest, and of the many that of Mulhar Ráo was one. The onset of the Mahrattás was furious; but the cool, collected bravery with which the Dooránis breasted the shock, was more welcome to the disaffected chief. Sudáseo Bháo was seen where the battle raged deadliest, exhorting his men by his own personal example to the most valiant achievements; but in the manœuvres of the Dooráni chief Mulhar Ráo read with glistening eyes the movements of a superior general. It was then that he sounded his retreat. His faithful followers followed him with passive obedience, though many sighed that in such a glorious harvest they alone were debarred from reaping laurels. But there was none to dispute the general's command, for Mulhar Ráo was alike respected and beloved.

From his own pavilion Mulhar Ráo looked out on the field of battle, and marked each vicissitude with keen attention. The tide of war rolled from one scene to another, but his eyes rolled in the same direction also; nor did they blink one moment in their watch, till his

experienced observation told him that every advantage, which had been gained by his countrymen, was lost. A smile then feebly gathered on his countenance. He knelt down with tottering knees, and looked up to Heaven with silent satisfaction.

In the camp of Mulhar Ráo, there was a girl of rare beauty and accomplishments, just entering into womanhood, whom the chief had reared up with all a parent's tenderness. Her rank and parentage were unknown to him, and to the world, for she was only a foundling, whom the generous soldier had discovered in one of his errant excursions, exposed under a tree, apparently for destruction. To all, but to her especially, the open-hearted warrior was uncommonly kind. He called her his daughter; and she, on her part, endeavoured to repay his generosity by the most endearing attentions and respect. Her name was Anunt Bye. She was so beautiful, that the followers of the Prophet called her a peri of their paradise.

Mulhar Ráo was yet on his knees, when Anunt Bye entered his pavilion. With a timidity natural to her, she stood aside, hesitating to intrude, till on the cheek of her foster-father she observed an encouraging smile. She approached him, threw her arms around his neck, and while her eyes were suffused with tears, she pointed to him the field of battle.

"Father! you are avenged. Mark the flight of our countrymen; mark the carnage, and the streams of blood. You alone can change the tide of victory. Relent!"

Mulhar Ráo looked on the field of battle, and on the fair girl alternately; then, starting abruptly, flung her from him. The weeping maiden clung to his knees with an agony of love, and a tear also hung in the eyes of the affected warrior. But he was stubborn, though not unmoved.

"Mulhar Ráo had scarcely dashed away the weak drops that trickled down his cheeks, when the bloody figure of a young man stood before him, fully armed, and fresh

from the field of action. It was Antájee, his favourite chieftain.

"Ha! how is this?" exclaimed Mulhar Ráo, in surprise; "do I see disobedience and cowardice allied with thee on one day, my boy?"

"Sire, this is the first time I have disobeyed you; but cowardice I own not."

This was said in a tone that stung the sensitive veteran to the quick. He looked keenly at the youth, as if his eyes could pierce his heart and read his mischievous thoughts therein. But Antájee's face was an index to his mind, and that index was very fair. Both were silent for a time, then relaxing his sharp observation, Mulhar Ráo thus calmly addressed the young soldier: "I had cause to leave the field, my son, for I had been treated with indignity. Think you I could fight, to gather laurels for an upstart that had insulted me? You had no such cause, and yet you might have left the field likewise without dishonour when I ordered you to do so, for obedience was your duty. But when you disobeyed me the time for an honourable retreat for ever passed away. Better you had fallen with gashes on your breast, and been borne hither on your shield, than come to me as you do now."

"Sire, forgive me! I have been too rash in my speech if I have offended you. But mistake me not. I have not fled from cowardice. Mulhar Ráo is missed on the field. The general looks around, but in vain, for one of his superior talents, and repents his hasty word. All is lost if you do not stir. Lead on, and I will follow."

"A paltry shift unworthy of yourself," retorted the chief. "Sudáseo Bháo remembers not his disgraced soldier. Away!"

Antájee made no reply, but with the dignity of conscious innocence left the apartment.

The issue of the battle of Pániput is well known; nor does the historic scholar require to be informed with what superior generalship Mulhar Ráo extricated his party

from the dangers of a field fatal to his nation. Few of his army were lost; and of his brave chieftains, Antájee alone was missing. How did the old chief regard his loss? Did he not view it as a just punishment for his disobedience, and congratulate himself that he had got rid of him? No. He wept for him as a father weeps over the death of an only son; and the tears of beauty also watered Antájee's memory.

After the defeat of Pániput, Mulhar Ráo retreated into Málwá, carrying with him his disconsolate daughter, who for the first time was insensible to his kindness. Years passed away. The Ráo, employed in settling his possessions, and doing deeds of charity and benevolence, passed them in comfort and ease. But with Anunt Bye the sunshine of life was over, and she felt a dreariness of heart unnatural for her years. The usual fate of woman had become her own. She had loved, and had dreamt of unmingled happiness, and now felt how futile were such dreams!

Anunt Bye had been too long in the camp, and was too beautiful and amiable a companion, not to have lured, though unwittingly, the hearts of many a young soldier. How many had thus lost their peace of mind for ever, it were needless to mention; but there was one—perhaps the best and bravest of them all—whom she regarded above others, and, next to old Mulhar Ráo, delighted most to please. Arm in arm they threaded the banks of the dark Jumná every evening, watching the sweet lustre of the evening star, or gathering the wild-flowers that sprung upon their path; and thus were their hearts mutually lost. Antájee was this favoured soldier, and with him were lost the joys of Anunt's existence. Home had now no pleasures to satisfy the yearnings and sympathies of her heart, and solitude no charm. It is love that lends enchantment to the realities of life—happy love that with a spell gilds whatever it shines upon! Her love was with the lost one; and the lordly palace of Mulhar Ráo was to her but a dreary and desolate abode!

Years passed away. It was on a summer evening—the moon shining beautifully clear—that Anunt Bye stood on an open terrace that overlooked the placid waters of the Nermuddá. She was alone, her eyes were full of tears, and she was singing passionately snatches of some pathetic songs. “How beautiful!” murmured the girl, “are his impassioned lines,—

“O mystery of mysteries! human life!
 We live, and yet we know not what we are!
 Behold! there lies, as bound in gentle sleep,
 The purest flower that breathed our mortal air!
 Is that its end? That soul with virtues rife—
 Shall it not waken from its slumber deep?
 Faith tells a different, nobler story:
 That is the tenement, not the soul we loved;
 The soul lives yet, and lives in all its glory,
 Far to the realms of light and bliss removed,
 Its beauteous virtues ever more unfolding.
 Mourner! if thou wouldst earn its love again,
 Be at its side its bliss for aye beholding,
 O child of earth! from earth’s dark crimes abstain.”

And she repeated them again and again, while tears ran streaming down her cheeks. At that moment a low, earnest voice called her by name, and a hand gently clasped her own. She thought that the kind old Mulhar Ráo had crept to her side, but started on finding that it was a stranger who held her. Afraid to gaze again or to speak, she drew back her hand in fear. The young intruder heaved a sigh.

“You recollect many things—even poems of my composing; am I forgotten alone?”

Anunt Bye raised her eyes and looked earnestly at his face. The truth rushed to her heart: he was not dead. She flung her arms around his neck and wept with joy. Her lover was returned!

Antájee’s story was soon told. After the most desperate struggle on the field of Pániput, he was overpowered by numbers, severely wounded, and taken prisoner. His

conduct excited the admiration of Nujeeb-al-Dowláh, the great Rohillá chief, who principally contributed to the triumph of Ahmed Sháh Dooráni; and he received a better treatment than others in his confinement. His wounds were carefully attended to, and when he recovered, he shared much of his captor's confidence. Years of faithful service endeared him to that liberal chief; and eventually, he was set free, and permitted to return to his country.

Hearty was the welcome which Mulhar Ráo gave to his disobedient soldier; then turning affectionately towards his foster-child, he placed their hands together, and blessed them.

MISCELLANEA.

THE REPUBLIC OF ORISSÁ ; A PAGE FROM THE ANNALS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

THE republic of Orissa was comprised, till a recent period, within the dominions of the British Crown, and extended from the confines of Bengal on the north, to those of the Circárs on the south. Berár formed its western boundary, and the Bay of Bengal washed it on the east. But the boundaries of the new republic have been, by an Act of its Congress, passed in the year of Christ 1925, extended in a western and southern direction over a considerable portion of Berár, and to the whole of the Circárs. On the east, also, it has increased its empire over the alluvian land left by the retreating waters of the sea.

This delightful country, some seventy years ago, was inhabited by a weak and niggard race of aborigines, some scores of white settlers, a few Asiatic foreigners, and a horde of wild animals. But, year after year, since the earthquake of 1899, which is supposed by the superstitious nations of Europe to have effected a complete change in the constitution of the world, the enormous herds of the wilderness have been swept away with resistless rapidity, making room for wilder and more fearful denizens—untamed men. Amongst the various tribes that roam over the interior of Orissá, the name of the

Kingáries, or hill-tribes, has long been the most terrible to the neighbouring powers.¹ The preeminence of these tribes is not only secured by their superiority in numbers, but by a combination of great physical strength with an intrepidity and courage unknown to any other people of the world. They stray in large predatory bands, pillaging without distinction all whose ungarded attitude tempts their cupidity. Their chief arms are battle-axes and spears; but the deadly use of a Nágpore rifle is not unknown to them. However the name of these tribes may be connected with cruelty, robbery, and blood-shed, still it is one which is emblazoned on the triumphant flag of freedom; for Orissá owes her liberty to the daring adventures of her Kingáries.

On the 25th June, of the year 1916, was passed, in the Council Chamber at Pillibheet (the capital of British India), an Act, permitting a system of oppression revolting to the refined ideas of the Indian public. The purport of it was, that, it being found cheaper to support Indian labourers as slaves than to employ them at fixed wages, slavery was from that time forward to be re-established in British India, against all provisions to the contrary. And the Act stated—

1. That the title to a slave was established by its being proved that he or she was the issue of parents known and acknowledged to be Hindus by birth, and had voluntarily sold his or her freedom, or had his or her freedom sold by such parents.

2. That parents had a right to sell their children, and all children thus sold were to be considered as slaves.

3. That slaves were to be reckoned as the personal property of their owners, and liable to perform any service required of them, and disposable in any way their proprietors might choose.

- * 4. That a master beating, or otherwise grossly ill-using his slave, without great and notorious cause of offence, was to be amenable to punishment; but when

such cause had been given, a slave was liable to be tortured even with red-hot iron.

5. That a slave dying intestate, his owner was to become his heir-at-law, and inherit all his lands and effects.

An enactment so harsh and oppressive necessarily irritated the feelings of the native community. The odious distinction it made between the conquerors and the conquered struck them to the quick. The despotism of the British Government had for some time been regarded with the greatest hatred and dissatisfaction. But nothing—not the dishonest and inefficient administration of justice, not the gross corruption that prevailed in the highest functionaries of the Government, not even the total exclusion of the whole native population from every legitimate object of ambition, and every honourable species of employment—had spread such dissatisfaction, as this injudicious and disgraceful enactment. At first, from all quarters poured in entreaties, and appeals to good feeling. The *Morning Star*, the *Bengal Hurkaru*, and the *Agra Gazette* took up the cause of “poor, oppressed India.” But entreaties, appeals to good feeling, and editorial declamations were of no avail. Then came the *Indian Patriot*,* denouncing the British Government, predicting its coming overthrow, philosophizing on the future, and calling on the slumbering genii of India to extirpate the foreigners. But the liberty of the Press was violated by the tyrannic Government, and the editor, proprietor, and printer were ordered to be imprisoned. This changed the state of affairs. The spirit of the populace was kindled. On the north and on the south, on the east and on the west—everywhere, except in Pillbheet, the seat of empire—was raised the cry of revolt. All the provinces were in motion—thou-

* This tale was written and originally published in 1845, or long before the *Hindu Patriot* was in existence. It is needless therefore to say that that paper is not referred to.

sands daily joined the standard of rebellion, and first and foremost ranked the insurgents of Orissá.

But the road was yet open for peace; though ripe for a revolt, the Indian army was, on proper terms, prepared to close the breach. But, elated with some heroic achievements on the frontiers of Cooch Behár, the Government refused to make the slightest concession; and this denial was made more poignant to the patriots by a very declamatory article in the *Government Advocate*, which denounced and ridiculed their exertions. The following is the article alluded to:—

“We think the glaring impolicy of taking up arms against the Government, adopted as it has been by the patriots of India, will be admitted by those who have their eyes open and their senses awake. Does it not strike the mind of every sensible man, that India, for centuries to come, will not be able to wrest the supremacy from the grasp of her conquerors? When we view the disparity in numbers between the black and white population, the result of this rebellion may be feared; but we shudder not for our brethren when we consider the comparative physical and moral courage of the parties pitted against each other. As well might you overpower the rushing leopard with a flock of sheep, as make Bheekoo Bárik, with a hundred *sowárs* at his back, confront the fiery visage of an English drunkard. Even if that were possible, would it not be the wiser plan for the patriots moderately to pursue that course which in time may place them on an equal footing with their conquerors, as regards the cultivation of intellect and the rules of civilized life, than to begin at the wrong end, and seek for freedom without having acquired the simplest lessons of government to secure that liberty? Do they presume, like the genii of Aláddin’s lamp, to erect in one night a fair palace fit for the habitation of their deity? Are the Juggomohuns and Gocoldásas, the Opertis and Bindáhun Sirdárs fit persons to be intrusted with the management of a vast empire? Though the liberty of India be a con-

summation devoutly to be wished for, yet must it be admitted that length of time is needful to erect that fabric. Says the common adage, 'Rome was not built in a day.' That under the British Government the Hindus are prospering, and will prosper in spite of their ingratitude, cannot be denied. Go a century or two backwards, take notes of other days, and compare India as it *was* with India as it *is*, and mark the result. But not yet are the Indians fit to be a free people. Perhaps, as time rolls on, the day may come when it will be unjust to refuse to, and perhaps impossible to withhold from the Indians the rights of liberty, and then England may possibly think it just and proper to relinquish her sovereignty over them—but not till then. The Hindus are like children. They want what they cannot understand, fret because with paternal care we refuse to indulge them, and cry because we are deaf to their entreaties. After all, what is there in the last enactment, which is held up as the immediate cause of sedition, to irritate their feelings? The harsher and more outrageous features of slavery have now no existence. Slavery, as now constituted, hardly approaches the 'durance vile' of a common every-day labourer. To all intents and purposes the slave is as good as the *free* (?) labourer. But 'why does the enactment exclude Europeans from slavery?' they ask. *Why*, dear patriots? Because ye are the conquered, we the conquerors. Are you answered?

"Ere taking leave of the subject, we will give a piece of advice to the insurgent chiefs, which we hope and wish for their own sakes they may not wholly despise. They should immediately disband their followers, come to the capital, and on their knees sue for pardon from the Government. We believe the Governor-General in Council may think it proper to excuse them and the people, on an adequate sum being raised for the erection of a palace, now in contemplation for the accommodation of his lordship's family. This measure, if they think proper to adopt it, should be taken before it is too late. We under-

stand his lordship intends very soon to direct Sir George Proudfoot and the forces under his command to proceed, from the frontiers of Cooch Behár, where they are at present stationed, against the insurgent army now assembled at Beerbhoom.—29th Dec. 1917.”

This article highly incensed the patriot chiefs; and Bheekoo Bárik, the chief of the Kingáries of Orissá, was heard to say, “My *sowárs* can confront the devil when he is mad, leave aside drunkards, English, Scotch, or Irish!” A convention of delegates from the insurgent forces of Bengal, Behár, and Orissá was held at Mulhárpore, on the 8th September, 1918; and it was there resolved that the British Government, having infringed the rules of good government, by introducing slavery into India, and by making various other innovations in the administration of the laws, which innovations were found upon experience to be highly injurious and despotic, it was necessary to adopt bold measures to prevent misrule; and the warriors all vowed to shed the last drops of their blood in the cause of freedom, if bloodshed should be necessary. It was also resolved that the insurgent army should be divided into two bodies—those of Bengal and Behár comprising one, and those of Orissá the other. Gokool Dás Treebaidy was chosen leader of the former, and Operti Sirdár of the latter.

It is not our purpose to give minute details of the wars that followed. An army of ten thousand Irish soldiers, under the command of Sir G. Proudfoot, was directed to proceed first against the forces of Bengal and Behár, and soon subjugating that body, marched in the winter of 1919 for Orissá. The invasion of Orissá was also attended with success at the outset; and success was attended with the most revolting cruelties. The fortress of Rádánugur was taken at the point of the bayonet, no quarter was given, and the whole garrison was put to the sword; the sacred shrine of Sreekhettur was sacrilegiously pillaged; and Operti Sirdár was well-nigh overpowered on the plains of Parbutná, when the mounted troopers of

Bheekoo Bárik rushed boldly to the teeth of the enemy, and scattered the whole army in complete rout.

This decisive victory of the Ooryáhs led to promises of concession on the part of the British Government; and, pleased with the prospects of peace, the patriot insurgents fell off. The British Council, in the meantime, perceiving that the immediate danger had passed away, forgot its promises, or deceitfully deferred fulfilling them. Matters were thus circumstanced, when a private wrong brought this uncertain state of affairs to a conclusion.

Lukhun Dás Khundáti, a hero of the good old times, who held a conspicuous station amongst his countrymen, and whose valour was known far beyond the confines of his nation, had a daughter named Nuleeny, a paragon of loveliness. This beauty was early betrothed to one Jugoo Dás Mytheepo, a young man of a very promising character, and, what is more consonant to the taste of women, cast in the best proportions of strength and manly beauty. Bred in the camp, and under the particular care and example of Lukhun Khundáti, he had imbibed all the manners that conspicuously marked the character of that hardy veteran. In every deed of desperation he had a heart to resolve, a head to contrive, and a hand to perform. This youth, while signalizing himself in a sally party by the most desperate feats of gallantry, had fallen prisoner into the hands of one Subadár Báhádoor Gopee Dás, an Ooryáh by birth, and a rejected admirer of Nuleeny, who had enlisted in the service of the enemies of his country on account of domestic differences. From him Jugoo Dás expected no fair treatment, and received none. His highest powers of endurance were put to the test; and his captor, making the public cause subservient to his private feelings, refused all proffers of a ransom and exchange of prisoners, and kept him chained and strictly guarded, no intercourse being allowed to be held with him.

It must not be imagined that, during this period, Lukhun Dás and his friends were unmindful of the valiant

Jugoo. They tried every means for effecting his release ; but Gopee Dás was deaf to their proffers and entreaties. Young hearts, however, are not easily put down ; and the beautiful daughter of the Khundáti veteran was still planning and plotting for the escape of her lover, though hopelessness was depicted on the countenance of her father and the other elders of her country. With a spirit of chivalry which, in this age, is common amongst the women of no other country but Orissá, she left her father's house alone, disguised in the mean habiliments of a wandering *fakir*, to seek her beloved Jugoo among the hated Ferángees. What miseries and privations she suffered on the way, and how, when she did reach the place of her destination, she managed to ingratiate herself with her lover's captor, our deponent saith not ; but that she succeeded in all this is placed beyond doubt by the fact that, in the course of a short time, having laid aside the dress of a *fakir*, and assumed that of a soldier, she was enlisted amongst his keepers. Not to make a romance of a simple matter of history we will at once inform our readers that, in this capacity, she managed to secure his liberty—not however so effectually as to prevent pursuit. Furious and foaming Gopee Dás gave chase, with half a dozen *sowárs* at his back ; but Jugoo and his fair deliverer, being mounted on the fleetest horse ever transported from the happy shores of Arabia, were far out of harm's way.

It was not till they had reached the hills of Orotá Nágpore that their pursuers got sight of them. The *sowárs* pressed hard ; and their cheers and the clatter of their horses' hoofs, sounded fearfully near in the ears of the fugitives. Every moment lessened the distance between them, till the space was reduced to an arm's length. The horse on which Jugoo and his betrothed were mounted, had cleared a greater space than any horse ever did, and could proceed no more. Now was the desperate moment. The young Mytheepo dismounted, and, like a lion at bay, turned back upon his pursuers, and single-handed opposed them all, resolved to sell his life as "dearly as he could."

Two of his assailants were levelled with the ground, and he was on the point of despatching a third, when a robust hávildár caught him by the neck and brought him down on his knees, and would have killed him, but that the beautiful Nuleeny, joining in the *mêlée*, plunged a dagger into the hávildár's heart. In the meantime, warding off the blows which were dealt at him from all sides, Jugoo kept rapidly retreating, until, gaining the brow of a steep declivity, he flung himself over to the opposite side, and was instantly lost to view. A desperate escape! And did he escape alone, leaving his liberator, his own Nuleeny, in the hands of his bitterest enemy? Even so. Not that he valued his life more than hers, but because he felt persuaded that she could meet no wrong from one who had long professed to be her lover. Gopee Dás was an Ooryáh, and Jugoo knew that his countrymen, of all nations in the world, were the most chivalrously devoted to the fair sex. How could Gopee, then, he reasoned internally, harm a woman? Unfortunately, he did not consider that an Ooryáh who had so far demeaned himself as to enter into the service of the Ferángees—*m'lechhas*, whose very touch is pollution—and to take up arms against his native country, could not possibly retain the noble nature of his race. Alas! sad was the fate of Nuleeny! But that fate was quickly avenged.

Lukhun Dás Khundáti was no sooner informed of his daughter's death, than he repaired to the Kingáries, or hill-tribes. He raked up the fire that was slumbering beneath the ashes, urged home the despotism of the British Government, and at the head of eighty thousand men, began his terrible march towards the English seat of empire, sweeping all petty detachments like dust before his path. The whole kingdom was once again in arms, and all with one accord shouted for battle. On the 15th of October, 1921, took place the memorable engagement of the Jumná, so named because fought on the banks of that sacred river. The English generals were totally defeated—their army cut down to a man. Jógoo Dás and Gopee Dás

were found dead on the field of battle, locked fiercely in each other's arms ! On the 13th January of the following year Orissá proclaimed her independence, and though the Government of Pillibheet refused to recognise it, their armies completely evacuated that province, after a few vain efforts to disturb its independence.

Years have passed over those events. The British Empire is sinking fast into that state of weakness and internal division which is the sure forerunner of the fall of kingdoms. Its former glory is now no more. But, with the usual inconsistency of human pride its tone was never more haughty, nor the exterior of its court ever more ostentatious.

“ The shadow lengthens as the sun declines.”

We regret for its fallen grandeur ; we regret to see an imperial bird, shorn of its wings and plumage of pride, coming down precipitately from its æry height. The Council is still sitting, and is a scene of wrangling and confusion—a shadow of what it was, and a lively example of the insufficiency of regulation in a declining State. In the meantime, from this picture of fallen glory, and of the vicissitudes of human greatness, the eye is attracted by the morning splendour of a brilliant luminary. A splendid spectacle is presented to the eyes of wondering millions, of a nation emerging from the chaos of ignorance and slavery, and hastening to occupy its orbit on the grand system of civilization. The Republic of Orissá has become the predominant star in Hindustán.

JUPITER'S DAUGHTERS.

WE borrow the name of one of Mrs. Jenkin's novels, not to review it, but to brush up our classics. The Greek fables are very rich, though unfortunately at the same

time very obscene. They have, however, an undercurrent of wisdom and instruction which makes their study not unprofitable. The form of conveying instruction by fables was apparently the earliest in use, and despite extravagancies and obscenities—both common defects of the olden times—we think it also the best, because the impression left by it is the most lasting. We forget the maxims of Plato and Bacon; but who has ever forgotten the fables—Greek, Hindu, or English—that he learnt in his youth? ●

Jupiter, according to the Greek fables, was the most powerful of the gods. He bore a great resemblance to our oriental princes of modern times—at least in the chapter of wives and concubines. The Korán gives the Faithful four wives, and as many mistresses as he may choose to support. The Hindu Rájáhs also have, at all times, delighted in a large number of both, whom they called their own so long as they could keep them confined within their palace-walls. Similarly, Jupiter had some eight or nine wives, namely, Metis, Themis, Eurynome, Ceres, Mnemosyne, Maia, Dione, Latona, and Juno; while the number of his mistresses was legion, including Semele, Io, Danæ, Antiope, Leda, Ægina, Europa, Callisto, Alcmena, and Electra. Some accounts make out Juno only to have been his lawful wife, all the rest being regarded as left-handed connections, like the *Nikàs* of the Mahomedans; but this was not the general belief. The progeny of Jupiter were of course very numerous. We propose to notice the goddesses first, as we are warm advocates of female rights.

The most powerful of Jupiter's daughters was Minerva or Pallas Athenæ, the goddess of wisdom, war, and chastity; whose authority and consequence in Heaven are represented as having been equal to those of her father. The account of Sanchoniatho, the Phœnician, recognises an Athenæ, the daughter of Cronus, who accompanied her father in his travels over the earth, during which he came to Attica and bestowed it upon her. The Egyptian

account makes Minerva and Isis to be the same. The Greek account, which is dissimilar to both, says that Minerva was conceived in the womb of Metis (prudence), the first wife of Jupiter, who was devoured by her husband in a constrictor fashion, because heaven and earth had foretold that the child that would be born of her—the blue-eyed Tritogenia—would be equal to her father in strength and counsel. The birth, however, could not be prevented, possibly because the god had not masticated his fare; his brain became the seat of the unborn babe; a severe neuralgic headache followed; and, depletion being the medical treatment in fashion in those ages, the opening of an artery gave Minerva passage to come out armed. The surgeon, according to some authorities, was Vulcan, according to others, Prometheus, both of whom appear to have held M.D. degrees of the old school. From this time the child of his head became Jupiter's greatest favourite. Lord Bacon reads the fable as explaining how kings, after sucking their counsellors dry, give birth to the counsel in the form of a decree or order emanating from themselves. Our reading is that the ancient Greeks understood his lordship's aphorism that "Knowledge is Power" as well as he did, though none of them had asserted it as bluntly; and that Minerva in the fables represented the former, while Jupiter represented the latter.

We need not repeat from Lempriere what all the attributes of the goddess were, for they are well-known. Her pretensions to beauty were considerable, for she contended with Venus and Juno for the golden apple thrown by Discord into the feast of the Immortals, with the inscription, "To the fairest." We do not read, however, that she was much prized in Heaven, which would seem to indicate that wisdom there—whether allied with beauty or not—was rather at a discount. The only admirers of the goddess in the aerial regions were her father, who consulted her on all occasions, power being of little use without the guidance of wisdom; and her brother Vulcan, the artist, who wanted to marry her, that is, to unite art

with wisdom for ever; to which the lady would not agree, well knowing that most artists are but fools.

The admirers of Minerva on the earth were numerous, which is very complimentary to our common sense; and her kindnesses in return were very endearing, and were shared in by every prudent chief we read of. Homer represents her as constant in her attentions to all his great heroes. She stands by Achilles during his altercation with Agamemnon, when

“Half unsheath’d appear’d the shining blade.”

The hot-headed fool was rushing upon certain destruction, since any act of violence to the chief of the Greeks in the midst of them was sure to be promptly answered by a stab. Wisdom pulls him by the hair; even Achilles discovers that discretion is the better part of valour, and his wrath is contrôlled though not appeased. He receives her assistance on other occasions also, especially when in his thirst for conquest he finds himself surrounded by the waves of the Xanthus, from which only Neptune (his nautical skill) and Minerva (prudence) could rescue him. More frequently still she is seen at the side of Ulysses, her especial favourite, as Nestor forcibly describes him in the *Odyssey*:—

“Never on man did heavenly favours shine
With rays so strong, distinguish’d, and divine.”

When the Greeks in a body accept the proposal of Agamemnon to re-embark for home, Pallas (wisdom) descends to Ulysses (the wise) to prevent such a disgraceful retreat, upon which he represents eloquently to his brother-chiefs how unsatisfactory it would be

“So long to remain, then bootless to return.”

In the *Odyssey* she directs him to the palace of Alcinous in the form of a girl carrying a pitcher,—

‘————— in which low disguise
Lay hid the goddess of the azure eyes.

But nowhere does she appear in better light than when receiving him on his own island of Ithacā after he had been left there by the Phæacians, when, after having listened patiently to the story he invents to account for his presence there,—

“O! still the same Ulysses! she rejoined,
In useful craft successfully refined!

* * *

Know'st thou not me who made thy life my care
Through ten years' wandering and through ten years' war?”

Minerva appears to Diomedes, the next great hero of the Greeks, when rashness hesitates to rush pellmell against the gods, and incites him on first against Venus and next against Mars, inculcating that Imbecility and Ungovernable Fury even in high quarters are not enemies that Wisdom need shrink from. She is at hand even to arrest the arrow of Pandarus from piercing Menelaus to the quick. But she never appears at the side of Ajax—“Mars' idiot, who has not so much wit as would stop the eye of Helen's needle,”—which would seem to imply that, in the poet's opinion, bulk and strength were rarely refined by judgment and discretion. In earlier times Hercules, Theseus, and Perseus were particularly favoured by her; and also Jason, the chief of the Argonauts. She superintended the building of the Argo, and by her care crowned the efforts of those embarked in it with success, which implies the necessity of enterprise being guided by prudence. Similarly, she superintended the building of the Wooden Horse that took Troy, the entire adventure being based on sagacity and wisdom. But of all her partialities the most marked was her motherly fondness for Telemachus, which imparts a particular charm to his youthful and hesitating discretion. She advises him in the form of Mentos to go in quest of his father, and when, on parting, her divinity is made manifest, “heroic thoughts his heart dilate” and wisdom and common sense take the place of inanity and youth. She again assumes the human

form to guide and direct him during his wanderings, which fills even old Nestor's heart with envy, and makes him sing out—

“Pallas herself, the war-triumphant maid,
Confess'd is thine, as once thy father's aid.
So guide me, goddess! so propitious shine
On me, my consort, and my royal line!”

The only flagrant instance of unkindness recorded of Minerva was the punishment she inflicted on Tiresias, for an act of juvenile heedlessness. Minerva loved his mother Chariclo, and on one occasion both together went to bathe in Helicon. Tiresias, coming in quest of his mother, saw what was not permitted to mortal eyes, upon which he was struck blind. This naturally enraged Chariclo, who upbraided the goddess for her severity, upon which Minerva explained that the infliction followed a law of Jupiter which it was not in her power to set aside; but that she would do all she could to alleviate its misery. To this end she conferred on Tiresias the gift of prophecy, gave him a magic staff to guide his footsteps, extended his age greatly, and allowed him the retention of all his mental powers through life.

The next daughter of Jupiter in point of importance was Diana, the offspring of Latona, and goddess of hunting and celibacy. The active predilections of the age made her a favourite deity; but, otherwise, there is nothing particular about her to remember. She turned Callisto into a bear for breach of chastity, and changed Actæon into a stag for having beheld her naked at the bath. But, for all that, her chastity, unlike that of Minerva, was not above suspicion, since she is represented as having granted very familiar favours to Endymion, Pan, and Orion, while Minerva is represented as having successfully resisted even the violence of Vulcan. Dryden is of course right when he says,—

“Better to hunt in fields a health unbought,
Than see the doctor for a nauseous draught.”

But it is not the less true that this health-finding on the part of females, in company with their male friends, often leads to the finding of other things which were not particularly or very urgently required, and all our Di Vernons may as well take a note of this. Lord Bacot explains Endymion to have been some court-favourite, and Diana a sovereign, who quitted his throne to unbosom himself to his friend. We have, of course, the highest respect for his lordship's learning and ingenuity; but a cave, it appears to us, was not the best place for such conference, and, if the sovereign was of the female sex, his lordship's conceit does not mend matters in the least.

The third daughter of Jupiter in the order of precedence was Venus, begot of Dione, and believed to be the same as Astarte, though others hold Astarte and Diana to be the same. Jupiter had sworn by the Styx to give to Vulcan whatever he desired, upon which he first wished to have Minerva for his bedfellow, against which Wisdom protested, and with success. Vulcan next asked for Beauty and Love, a pardonable request in an artist who expected that his wife would read his visage in his mind, but which, being granted, caused him no end of troubles. The olden nations seem all to have entertained a very indifferent opinion of the female sex, and beauty, whether among goddesses or women, is almost always represented as very frail. Venus yielded her person to Mars, Mercury, Bacchus, and Neptune among the gods, and to Adonis and Anchises among mortals. By the last she had Æneas, whom,—

mindful of the love
She bore Anchises in the Idæan grove,"

she rescued from the fury of Diomed on the field of Troy, being herself wounded on the occasion by her mortal antagonist. She was the patroness, not only of chaste love, but also of wantonness and incestuous enjoyments, nay, even of beastliness, as is testified by the adoration of *Venus fricatricæ*. We find her quite in her element

when, acting as a go-between, she brings Helen to her paramour's bed :—

“Haste, happy nymph ! for thee thy Paris calls,
Safe from the fight, in yonder lofty walls ;
Fair as a god ! with odours round him spread
He lies, and waits thee on the well-known bed.”

Her worship was universal ; gods and men alike paid homage to her power. Juno herself borrowed her girdle to regain the heart of her truant husband ; and Vulcan, who knew all the intrigues of his wife, always forgave her when she appeared before him in her loveliness, an example which husbands in all ages have eagerly followed.

Proserpine, the queen of Hades, may be allowed the fourth rank. She was so beautiful that first her own father, and then her uncle Pluto, became enamoured of her. Incest was a favourite crime among the Greeks, and the gods were particularly addicted to it. Jupiter made love to Proserpine in the form of a serpent. Is the story of Eve and the serpent borrowed from this fable ? Pluto, who did not think worse of the beauty for Jupiter's love, forcibly carried her off to Hades while she was gathering flowers. This was the most celebrated event in her life. Ceres searched for her all over the earth for several days, till at last Proserpine was got back from the lower regions by the intervention of Jupiter, and was allowed to remain with her mother for two-thirds of each year. The fable is understood to signify the cultivation of corn, Proserpine being the seed that lies concealed under the ground, the time that intervenes between the sowing of the seed and the appearance of the ear being four months, during which period she is of the earth, earthy. The Eleusinian mysteries were celebrated in honour of Proserpine and Ceres. They were *not* indecent, as some fathers of the Church represented them to be. Pausanias says, that Pindar, when grown old, was visited by Proserpine in a dream, when she complained that she alone of all the

deities was not celebrated in his hymns, but that when he came to her he would make a hymn to her praise. Ten days after the poet died; and an old woman of Thebes in a dream heard him sing a hymn to Proserpine, which, on awaking, she committed to writing. ••

Hebe was the daughter of Jupiter and Juno, though some authorities make her the daughter of Juno alone, she having conceived her after eating lettuces. This mystery of the lettuces should be more largely inquired into by our homeopaths, for the barren ladies of Bengal are always yearning for children, and it would make the fortune of the practitioner who should discover what lettuces will lead to conception, and how they are to be administered. Juno made Hebe the cup-bearer of heaven, but she once chanced to fall down in an indelicate position, and after that Jupiter would not have her in that office, an awkward position on the part of a young maiden being justly held objectionable by the father of gods and men, at a place where the cup that inebriates was constantly going round. She afterwards became the wife of Hercules, when he was taken up to dwell with the gods, and it was he who first struck up the song—"None but the brave deserve the fair." The fable says that Hebe had the power of restoring both gods and men to the vigour of youth. It is doubtful, however, if this was peculiar to herself. Many wise men, from the time of David downwards, have held that all young girls have this virtue in greater or less degree.

Juno also gave birth to Lucinia or Ilithya, the goddess of midwifery, which science was besides well understood by Diana and Juno. Lady-doctors are, therefore, not an original Yankee institution after all. Nothing is new under the sun, and the Americans seem only to have revived what was long practised among the gods.

The other daughters of Jupiter were the Seasons, the Fates, the Muses, and the Graces. The first were three in number only, and we in Bengal have virtually not more, i. e. nothing beyond our winter, summer, and the

rains. Homer calls the seasons "gold-filleted;" and in the Orphean hymns they are called "flower-ful" and "odour-ful"—all very pretty descriptions surely. The Fates (*Parcæ*) were also three, one of whom spun the thread of life, which another measured out by lot, while on the third devolved the inexorable duty of cutting it without regard to age, sex, or quality. The Muses were nine in number, all begotten of *Mnemosyne* or Memory; and their birth-place was *Pieria*, in *Macedon*. They were generally represented as young and beautiful, but diffident also; so that learning in all ages has always been clothed with modesty, of which our pushing B.A.'s and M.A.'s may take note. Sometimes the ladies were represented as dancing in a chorus, intimating the near connection that exists between the different branches of education. The daughters of *Pierus* challenged them to music, and on being defeated were turned into magpies. We have plenty of magpies in our colleges and schools, and out of them also; but have we had any muses anywhere since the days of *Tytler* and *Richardson*? The *Graces* were born of *Eurynome*, one of the *Oceanides*. *Hesiod* describes them as distilling "care-dispelling love" from their eyes, and looking "lovely from beneath their eyebrows." Every reader of course knows some one living to whom the description will apply, so that the number from three at the outset must have vastly multiplied. The name of *Thalia* occurs both among the Muses and the *Graces*, possibly because she was both a Muse and a Grace, as they all deserved to be. She presided over festivals and pastoral poetry, and was distinguished from her sisters by a shepherd's crook—very graceful surely, and meant perhaps as a bait for hermits. This conjecture is confirmed when we find that they dressed her in short petticoats. We trust that our *Entrance-wallahs* and L.A.'s will not come in her way.

Of Jupiter's illegitimate daughters we shall say nothing. The Greek husbands took credit to themselves if the gods shared their beds, and illegitimacy of birth was

not held by them as a reproach. But the times are now changed, and readers have become so fastidious that no one would care to read even the tale of Helen "the divine" if he only knew that she was not procreated by her mother's husband.

THE SONS OF JUPITER.

THE sons of Jupiter were, at all events, numerically less strong than his daughters, though it does not appear that he was in the habit of devouring his male children as old Saturn was.

Apollo, the son of Jupiter and Latona, was the god of all the fine arts, including poetry and music, and also of medicine. He was, moreover, the deity who inflicted plague and pestilence, which was part and parcel of his medical attributes; and it is in this character that he appears in the first book of the Iliad when, "fired to vengeance at his priest's request," "bent was his bow the Grecian hearts to wound," whereupon

"On mules and dogs the infection first began,
And last his vengeful arrows fix'd on man."

Mars was older than Apollo, but Jupiter loved the latter best. Juno, the mother of Mars, had apprehended, with the intuition of a step-mother, that this would be so, and tried to prevent the birth of Apollo by putting difficulties in the way of Latona getting a resting-place during her labours. At last Delos rose to receive her, and Apollo was born.

Like all the Greek gods, Apollo was extremely amorous, but it does not concern us to chronicle all his love-adventures here. His first love for Daphne is a poetical conceit. Daphne stands for Fame, which all poets love, but which is so rarely found. Apollo saw and burn'd; but the nymph fled before him. He pursued, he bagged,

he entreated; but the lady would not listen, and was not to be overtaken.* In her fear she stretched forth her hands to her father, Peneus, for protection, and the nymph became a tree, the laurel. And so have all the pursuers of Fame found her. Be the chase ever so eager and hotly pursued, the thing attained consists only of a bunch of bay-leaves, or at best a title, a statue, or a monument.

Apollo's pursuit of Cassandra is well-known. Prophecy, or good advice, unaccompanied by love or kind feeling, is never listened to, and Cassandra's predictions, however well-founded, never received any attention. She had obtained from the god the best of the accomplishments he could confer, but not a conciliatory manner; and no one therefore cared for her instructions. We see this often in life. Many schoolmasters are very erudite, but their pupils derive no benefit from their teachings, because of the want of that manner which endears.

The only celestial amour of Apollo was with Calliope, the muse of fair voice and heroic poetry; and the fruit of his connection with her was Orpheus, whose strains moved rocks and stones and the magnates of hell. Another great son of Apollo was Æsculapius, so famous for his knowledge of the healing art; but the mother of the First Doctor—Coronis—seems not to have been very faithful to the god, since she is said to have been detected in the arms of a Hæmonian youth by that unimpeachable witness, the raven, who was then white, but was changed into a black colour for his officiousness, by the very god whom he had wished to serve. Between husband and wife no one should presume to interfere, nor between lover and mistress. Lovers do not like to receive the proofs of their ladies' infidelity forced on them.

Apollo figures constantly in the pages of Homer, both in the heavens and among men. Following the example of Minerva, on the Grecian side, he is frequently seen inciting the Trojans to the war. In the first day's battle,

when Ulysses by his bravery makes the Trojans waver, and even Hector himself to give ground, when

“ Seized with affright the boldest foes appear,
Even god-like Hector seems himself to fear,”

Apollo cries out from the citadel to remind his partisans that

“ The great, the fierce Achilles fights no more.”

The bards and prophets were his especial favourites, and were taught by him. In the *Odyssey* Demodocus, being inspired by Apollo, sings of what he had not seen or heard.

Mars was the son of Jupiter and Juno, though some authorities maintain that he was the son of Juno alone, that goddess having been particularly fond of dispensing with the services of her husband in the procreation of children, though her good name has never been necessarily questioned. In the case of Hebe it was the eating of lettuces that impregnated her; in the case of Mars the same result was obtained by smelling a flower, which would be paid for by its weight, not in gold, but in diamonds, if it could now be discovered and made known. The tutor of Mars was Priapus; and the pupil was apt in catching the lessons he received from so famous a master, though the only redoubtable tale of his amours is that of the intrigue with Venus, his brother's wife. As god of war, Mars is always represented as fond of tumult and strife; but his valour and fury make no head against skill and prudence even in fable, and not only Minerva, but even a mortal, Diomedes, guided by Minerva, drives him wounded from the field of battle, groaning to the skies. Fear, terror, and strife are his children, and very properly so; but he is also the father of Harmonia, a very good story to teach that harmony in the universe arises out of disorder.

One remarkable circumstance connected with the history of Mars is that he was tried in a mortal court of

justice—the court of Areopagus—by mortal judges, on the charge of homicide, he having killed a son of Neptune for having offered violence to his daughter Alcippe. Mars was acquitted, as it was a clear case of justifiable homicide. If even gods were tried by men, why do the Europeans in this country raise such a howl on every occasion that a nigger sits in judgment over them?

The Roman legend of Rhea Sylvia is well-known. All heroes and gladiators were particularly anxious to claim Mars for their sire, and cared little if it tarnished their mother's good name; and this weakness finds a parallel in many a tale both of the east and the west. Bastardism has never been a reproach when carrying the impression of nobility with it. In our own times there have been many men who boasted of having been begotten, for instance, by George IV. or Lord Byron, or other titled scamps of the same school.

Vulcan was the son of Jupiter and Juno; but, as in the case of Mars, some contend that he was born of Juno alone, so that that discreet matron is, by certain authorities at least, credited with three children—Mars, Vulcan, and Hebe—not generated by her husband. Vulcan was born lame, say some writers, and was for that reason thrown into the sea by his own mother. Others would have it that he was kicked out of heaven by his father, for attempting to unfasten the golden chain by which his mother had on one occasion been manacled by her husband, who refused to be henpecked, and that he broke his leg by the fall. But the heavens could not do without the artist, since the gods had as much need of houses, furniture, ornaments, and arms as men. Vulcan, however, would listen to no compromise; an unceremonious kick is not easily forgotten. At last a trick was played on him, that trick which ever since has had so much influence on artists in particular in all countries. Bacchus got him intoxicated; the grapes' juice was irresistible and irresistible, and Vulcan went back to heaven and was reconciled to his parents: and perhaps this was the only

instance in which the grapes' juice did a good thing, and did it well. In later life Vulcan became more wary in respect to interference in the disputes of his parents. In Book I., *Iliad*, he only interposes to restore peace between them.

"The feast disturb'd with sorrow Vulcan saw,
His mother menaced and the gods in awe;
Peace at his heart and pleasure his design,
Thus interposed the architect divine!
'The wretched quarrels of the mortal state
Are far unworthy, gods, of your debate!'"

The character of Vulcan was, on the whole, exemplary; that is, as compared with that of the other gods generally. We have noticed elsewhere his attempt to ravish Minerva; and, besides being married to Venus, he is said to have had two mistresses, named Charis and Aglaia. But he was distinguished, not for his debaucheries, but for his handiwork. All the habitations of the gods were made by him; also all their chariots and arms. At the request of Jupiter, he made the first woman, Pandora, to deceive Prometheus, to whom she brought a boxful of sorrows and distempers, which must have since multiplied on the earth a million-fold, since no big-sized Treasury chest will now contain the whole of them. He also made brass-footed bulls for Helius, king of Colchis; a brazen man for Minos; gold and silver dogs for Alcinous; a collar for Hermione, the wife of Cadmus; a sceptre for Agamemnon; one shield for Hercules and another for Achilles; and, for himself, the old lascivious dog made golden maidens, who waited on him. It would seem that the artist was a regular doll-maker in his day, and, as he was able to endue his dolls with reason and speech, he would have made his fortune in our own puppet-show times. It was mainly for his art and design that he was tolerated in heaven, where he was the butt of all the wags as the great cuckold of the age, even his wife joining in the ridicule against him. But he was a quiet cuckold, and never made use of his horns. He caught Mars and Venus nicely, but all he did

was to forge an invisible net around them, and so to expose them to the jeers of the Olympian public, some of whom laughed at him for his trouble, and said that they would not care for the predicament Mars was in, if they could share in the offence.

Hermes was the son of Jupiter and Maia. He was a thief from his birth, and tried his "prentice hand" on the oxen of the gods which were under the care of Apollo. The little fellow was then yet in his cradle-cloths, but on being taxed with the theft stoutly denied it, and the case was regularly contested in the High Court of Olympus, before old Jupiter himself, who would not leave it in the hands of any of the minor judges. Hermes also stole the quiver and arrows of Apollo, the trident of Neptune, the girdle of Venus, the sword of Mars, several instruments of Vulcan, and the sceptre of Jupiter; and the father of gods and men, being quite charmed with his dexterity, made him his messenger or herald without any competitive examination, though he had at first intended to make the selection by the B.A. test. He also made him his *confidanté*, and as such Hermes learnt the art of love-making in the best school. His own amours were necessarily numerous, and he was the father of a plentiful progeny as distinguished as himself, including Autolycus, the thief, and Priapus.

As a matter of course, Hermes was the god of pick-pockets and thieves; he was also the god of merchants; but it does not necessarily follow that the ancient Greeks prized all three as of equal worth—since mercantile morality was not so low in the old world as we find it in our own. He was also the patron-saint of declaimers and orators, which qualifications were justly appraised by the Greeks as mere gammon and claptrap, even though they had, and could have, no inkling of the oratory now rampant among our patriots in Calcutta, *i.e.* the patriots of the "squeaking," the "screeching," and the "gibbering" classes. Presents of milk and honey were made to him as god of eloquence; but his admirers of the present day

appear to feed entirely on curd and vinegar. The Greeks and Romans offered him tongues by throwing them into the fire, a devotion which should find imitators among our long-tongued friends here, who battle in season and out of season merely to see half a column of newspaper-writing attached to their names.

The illegitimate sons of Jupiter were many, but do not require any notice in this place, except Bacchus, who was made a god even before he ceased to be a man, for the grand discovery he made of wine. All countries claim him as their own, the Osiris of Egypt and the Siva of India being held to be identical with the son of Semele. So great an authority as Jupiter himself is made to say in the Iliad that Bacchus was born "a joy to mortals." In Greece the orgies of Bacchus were celebrated with great extravagance, and also with great indecency. Royal maids and matrons joined the carousals, and of course surrendered their persons freely to their male associates. This is proved by the admission of Xuthus in Ipn, before the Delphic oracle :—

"Didst thou approach any illegitimate nuptials ?

"Ay, in the folly of youth.

"Before you wedded with the daughter of Erectheus ? .

* * * * *

"Ay, with the Mænads of Bacchus.

"In thy senses, or overpowered with wine ?

"Amid the delights of Bacchus."

These 'delights' have been familiar to India from the earliest times. We read that the *amrita* was churned out of the ocean and was shared by the gods, being withheld from the *ásours*—or *ahoors*, as our orientalists read the word now—by deceit. But the gods were circumvented, and the men did get possession of the drink, though the name, *amrita*, was possibly changed. An Egyptian story says that Bacchus, during his Indian expedition, turned a river that was running blood into wine, and that the Indians drank of it, became mad drunk, and fell asleep, upon which their country was easily conquered. The miracle

must have been subsequently reversed, for by the time of Chandragupta the draught of immortality had apparently become scarce in India, the river of wine had dried up. We read that one of his sons, Amitraghāta, applied to Antiochus Soter, his maternal uncle, to send him a supply of Greek wines, and ever since the slang name of *Mámárbáree* (maternal-uncle's house) has been applied to the wine-shop by all our oriental *sáuváns*. But the visits to *Mámárbáree* were never so frequent as they have become since the advent of the English to India with that remarkable sign of their civilization the brandy-bottle. Of course Bacchus made a progress through the world to instruct mankind, and he must have roamed through the best part of it by this time. The playmates of Bacchus in youth were the Satyrs, a very significant lesson for young beginners. The Muscs also moved in his train. This is rather startling, but not the less true. Our best men, the leaders and conductors of human thought and intelligence, are but abject slaves of their passions, and inordinately addicted to the wine-cup. But we had better stop here, or all the Egregiouses of Bengal will be up in arms against us.

THE STREET-MUSIC OF CALCUTTA.

I DEVOTED a whole day to listen to the street-music of Calcutta, and report the result for the information of my readers. The cries to which I refer are to be heard daily in the native part of the town. Those peculiar to the European portion of it are of course very different.

I.—KOOAR-GHOTEE-TOLLÁH !

Almost the first cry every morning is that of the *Kooar-ghotee-tolláh*. Be the day ever so cold or so rainy there is the man ready to extricate from the bottom of the

well whatever you may have dropt in it, though the cry speaks of brass *lotahs* only." The Moorish lady cried ~~her~~ heart out for the earrings she had dropt in the well, which she could not recover. There must have been no *kooar-ghotee-tolláh* in Spain in her day, for earrings, or nose-rings, or finger-rings, are all picked out of wells in Calcutta with the greatest facility. Look at the man as he stands before you—an elderly, stout fellow, with elephantiasis on one leg—and you would hardly think him capable of the feat by which he earns his daily bread. He must dive at least five or six times a day to earn a decent pittance, for two or three pice is all he gets each time; and the frail steps on the well-side by which he gets down are not contemptible dangers to brave for the price paid to him. Talk of old Bazaine's escape from Fort St. Marguerite! It surely was not half so perilous as these incessant descents into wells kept as dirty as can be imagined and in indifferent repair; and yet who has ever heard of a *ghotee-tolláh* having died in the execution of his duty?

But have not water-pipes superseded the use of wells in every family-residence in Calcutta? asks the English reader, entirely innocent of native ways and doings. No, Aryan brother, they have not. The supply of Municipal water is little to be depended upon, and fails frequently at very inconvenient hours; and our Hindu ladies are so aquatic in their habits, and delight so much in water, that an unfailing supply of it from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. is an absolute necessity of their lives. Almost every act of housewifery requires the washing of hands or clothes, and many make entire ablutions of the body imperative; and since the filtered water of the Municipality is not to be had at all hours, there is no alternative for the mass but the well and the *ghotee*. They speak again, of the compulsory setting-up of metres in private houses to regulate the supply of water according to the rate paid for it. The idea is not particularly liberal; to our thinking the supply of water, like that of air and light, should be unchecked. But, as our sapient commissioners seem to think other-

wise, "don't fill up your wells yet" is our warning and advice to all whom it may concern.

II.—THE SONG OF THE MÁKHUM CHORÁ.

This is a song of the boyhood of Krishna, when that mischievous urchin used to go about from dairy to dairy stealing butter. The itinerant singer goes, Homer-like, from house to house, singing the delinquencies of the little god, that the morning might be commenced auspiciously by all, with the achievements of the deity fresh in their recollections. It is rather odd giving lessons in thieving to business-people at this early hour, as the instruction is not unapt to stick in the minds of those who buy and sell, and to influence their actions throughout the day. Songs about Rámchandra are also sung. For these regular reminders the singers claim a small *buxis* (varying from four pice to two annas) at the end of each month. The songs are good to hear, and some of the singers have very musical voices; and so, for one reason or another, the imposition is tolerated by all families.

III.—JYE RÁDHAY! BHIKAYÁPYE BÁBÁ?

The begging appeals in Calcutta are intolerable nuisances that recur from daybreak to dusk; and there is no means of putting them down, as the police will *never* interfere. I don't object to an old woman, or a blind or lame man, appealing to one for charity; but for two real objects of sympathy that accost you, there are four or six stalwart claimants whose only plea for appeal is that they are Vysnubs, which they think gives them a right to demand alms. They actually give you *gálles* if you send them away empty-handed. "What, such a Burrá Báboo, with such a house to live in, and not give alms! Remember there is another place to go to; for he that turns away the beggar from his door gets no admittance in Vycant." Cheek of this sort is constantly given; and as you can't condescend to resent it, you are obliged to submit to it

with the best grace you can. Often, very often, a sturdy beggar will refuse to leave your door without a reasonable dole. If you ask the *páharáwálla* to eject him, the man of authority laughs at your face; if you tell your own people to push out the applicant, there is an action for assault, sometimes resulting in a fine: at all events, I remember having once read of such a case, in which the learned magistrate held that force should not have been used for expulsion, without laying down however how the expulsion was otherwise to be effected when the party to be dealt with is strong-limbed, obstinate, and clamorous.

Of course, as I have said, there are many real objects of charity, who, in a city where there is absolutely no provision for them, well deserve the attention of the humane. But, when your temper is once upset by stubbornness, it rarely happens that you are able to do your duty to the rest. "Don't admit any of them," is the snappish order the master gives to his door-keeper; and so many a poor woman loses the pice or grain that she would otherwise have received.

IV.—SISSEE, BOTTLE BIKREE!

This is an expressive cry, a proof of the march of civilization as represented by the brandy-bottle. From house to house the *Bikreewálla* collects all the empty bottles, in broad daylight, as a matter of course, and without any attempt whatever at concealment. The cry is constantly raised that Young Bengal is afraid to avow his liberalism; but surely the avowal, as regards the consumption of spirituous liquors, is distinct enough. *Sissees* (medicine phials) are, of course, also asked for; but you see every *Bikreewálla* passing by loaded with champagne, beer, and brandy bottles, with their labels on. It is an every-day and every-hour matter now, and the number of *Bikreewállás* is so large that one is staggered in attempting to compute the amount of consumption it represents. If you detect me in giving out bottles from my house, I

have my answer ready: "Some rose-water bottles only, which I do not know what to do with. But pray, don't smell them; bad gases may have generated in them, and you may fare the worse for doing so."

V.—POORÁNÁ KÁGOCH!

What a stentorian voice that bearded Mahomedan has who every morning cries out at your door for old newspapers! Do the worthy gents of the fourth estate know what their bad grammar and worse taste actually sell for second-hand in the Calcutta *bazaárs*? Fourteen pice the quire; not a cowrie more! I haggled very hard once for 4 annas; but the devout Mahomedan swore by Álláh Bismalláh that he barely gets that rate from the shopkeepers, and could not therefore give me more than the fixed 3½ annas a quire. Twenty-four sheets of an *Indian Thunderer* for fourteen pice only! With this data given, will any B.A. or M.A. work off for us how much each furious leader is appraised at? I am not a dab at figures, but my calculations give just 9½ cowries for the biggest thunder—English or Patriotic. Some of these thunder-makers have sought sedulously for immortality by having blind-lanes named after them. The immortality of the whole genus will be found in the shops of the *Páunchunwálláhs*, if they will only seek for it there.

Akin to the above cry are the cries of

VI.—POORÁNÁ LOHÁ BIKREE!

VII.—POORÁNÁ CHÁTTÁ BIKREE!

VIII.—POORÁNÁ NAKRÁ KÁNI BIKREE!

There is no such thing as destruction in the world, says the philosopher. What we consider as such is only change. Your old iron, your old *cháttá* or parasol, all your tattered rags, are marketable articles: there is no destruction for them, but a salutary change? The broken

padlock will do service again in another shape; the *chattá* will receive a new era of existence after it is mended and a new cloth put on to it; the rags will be converted into paper—probably to print some big daily, to be sold again at $3\frac{1}{2}$ annas a quire! O tempora! O mores!

IX.—DHONG! DHONG! DHONG!

There goes the Kánsári's music! A cooly carries with him all the articles he has for sale. The gong and the bell are for *poojáhs*, if you are particularly fond of them; the *thállá*, or dining plate, for your first-born, if he has commenced to eat rice; the *lotáh*, the *pilsooj*, the *gároo*, anything you stand in need of, sir! But I don't want anything; still the infernal *dhong! dhong!* continues. It is enough to awaken the dead in their graves!

The Kánsári is a man well to do in life. He has a shop in the nearest *bazár*; and both in going to it and in coming back from it, he makes it a point to carry a cooly's load with him, if only to try the temper of the people whose houses he passes by. Braziers from other places, especially from Jagganáth, also frequent the streets, crying, *Thákoorbáteer bássan go! Thákoorbáteer bássan!* But this you don't hear every day, probably because the sellers are few in number, and perambulate different parts of the town by turns.

X.—KÁTÁO SEEL-CHÁKTEE, JÁNTÁ!

This is a horrible voice between a bawl and a screech. I wonder how much the man makes a day by this cry. Who on earth requires grinding-stones to be recut and repaired? And yet here is a man who makes his living by cutting them anew.

XI.—BHÁLO, BHÁLO, NAYÁ; NAYÁ, SÁP; SÁPAY

BÁNDORAY TAMÁSHÁR KHAYLE.

Here is poetry for you, reader; the serpent-charmer's poetry, as he goes about with his baskets full of serpents,

a baboon following at his heels that will play many tricks with the serpents, if you will pay a trifle for the *tumáshá*. It is, of course, well-known that the serpents are fangless; but what if one of the reptiles escapes while being played with and burrows in your house? Won't it get new fangs in time? Why then is the play permitted in a densely-crowded city? I never could look at serpents without dread. Our native dress at home gives us no protection against them if they are unwarily crossed, and I would unhesitatingly vote for the expulsion of all such players from the town. I know that there are many who take a delight in looking at the reptiles—particularly children. The impression left on these little fellows is various. One child, after such a sight in the day, woke up at night in convulsions, with the cry of “Sáp,” “Sáp,” and with froth foaming in his mouth. But this was an exceptional case. Generally, they are well pleased with the play so long as it lasts, and forget all about it afterwards; what especially delights them, being the music of the charmer, which certainly does charm all simple-hearted listeners—including the serpents, of course. These charmers, they say, can charm out serpents from their holes and capture them. I saw one attempt myself, but that was a failure. The serpent did come out to listen to the music, but snapped at the charmer every time that he approached it; and, as it was a rather large-sized cobra, the man did not much like the idea of cultivating any intimate acquaintance with it. But there is no doubt that they do capture many serpents in this way, for many good people have seen them do so.

XII.—CHYE MOONG-KE-DÁL?

A very good edible is *Moong-ke-dál*, the Arabicá Revelentá of the doctors, which has been known in this country from time anterior to the flood as a very wholesome food for the convalescent. The man who sells the *dál* is an up-country man, and the grains are very clean

and have been well picked. The Bengali does not know, or does not care, to clean his grains in the way these up-country people do it. The fact is he is more partial to his fish and *torkáree* than to his *dál*, though the *dál* is both more wholesome and more strengthening. Altogether, in the matter of food, the natives of Bengal are very much less particular than up-country Hindus. The former will take anything they can get that caste rules allow, and then hurry on to money-making; while the latter, though not less fond of money-making, will still find full time for cleaning and cooking their dinner well.

XIII.—HÁNSAYE DEEM CHYE; HÁNSAYE DEEM, GO!
HÁNSAYE DEEM!

How loud the man bawls! His custom perhaps is not as profitable as it used to be of old. Young Bengal is more fond of *Moorgeer Deem* (fowls' eggs) than of *Hánsayr Deem* (ducks' eggs); but of course the former cannot be hawked about openly except in Mahomedan quarters. The *Hánsayr Deem* is a loathsome food. Of fowls' eggs I have no personal experience, but they are said to be better. Both are taken by some people raw!!! and I have heard that doctors advise their being so taken. The idea makes the blood run cold.

XIV.—BELÁTEE ÁMRÁ CHYE; CHYE PÁT-BÁDÁM!

XV.—ÁLOO CHYE; PIÁZ CHYE?

The first may pass without comment; but *Aloo* (potatoes) and *Piáz* (onions) selling together in the streets of an orthodox town! Oh Menu and Vyasa! what are we coming to! There was a time when people lost caste for eating onions; while now potatoes and onions are carried round in the same basket from door to door, and even widows and Bráhmans buy the potatoes quite heedless of their unorthodox contamination.

XVI.—CHYE MÁLSEE DOHI; MÁLSEE DOHI CHYE, GO!

The cry is drawn out in lengthened sweetness, and reaches a great distance; and very great is the demand for the *dohi*. All people who can afford to pay for it buy it eagerly, for it very much facilitates the taking of rice—particularly when the days are hot. It is also very wholesome, notwithstanding some medical opinions expressed of late to the contrary. In bowel complaints it acts as a charm. The other variety of it, called *Málye Dohi*, is less digestible, and is only liked because it is more acid. They both sell in the streets with the greatest promptitude.

XVII.—TOOK-TÁP, TOOK-TOOM.

Play-things to sell! What a crowd of ragged children follow in the wake of the seller; all anxious to buy, but having no pice to pay! And what a variety of nick-nacks the man has got: birds made of coloured rags and decked with tinsel, paper *pálkees*, *ghúurics*, umbrellas, trees flowers, whistles, bells, cards, balloons, looking-glasses; everything, in fact, that is likely to catch a child's fancy. With villainous pertinacity these are displayed ostentatiously at every door. In vain do poor mothers tell the man to pass on, not having the pice to pay for what their children clamorously ask for. The man knows that the pice will be forthcoming, and generally succeeds in getting it out.

XVIII.—CHOOREE LIBEE, GO!

What a sweet melodious voice that girl has who goes from house to house selling *choorees*, or bracelets made of sealing-wax or glass! But all the poetry evoked by her voice vanishes the moment you get a full view of her face. The phiz of Medusa could scarcely have had a more petrifying effect. You close your eyes involuntarily, while the ear continues to drink the melody that floats by. *Chooree libee, go!* Yes, my love, I will buy up all

your *choorees* if you will go on hawking them in your own pretty way; but don't break the spell by turning your face towards me, or you will convert me into stone. Throw a veil over your features, and you will enhance the value of your wares.

XIX.—GHOTEE BÁTTEE SÁRÁBAY! GHORÁ, PILSOOJ SÁNTAY
ÁCHYA! BHÁNGÁBÁSUN SÁRTAY ÁCHAY!

No, man, no! I have no broken utensils to repair; pass on, please; your pertinacity is most annoying. Who can possibly require a tinker at his door every day of the year?

XX.—RÍPOOR KORMO!

XXI.—SALIE JOOTEÁ; JOOTÁ BROOSH!

XXII.—DO GOLIE SOOTÁ EK PYSÁ!

XXIII.—DHÁMÁ BÁNDÁBAY, GO!

XXIV.—BÁXO SÁRTAY ÁCHAY?

These shrieks and screeches are very trying indeed. There is no poetry in the voices. They are all matter-of-fact calls, for things or services which you cannot possibly stand in need of more than, say, once, twice, or four times a year; and yet you have to bear with the calls every blessed day of your existence, and fortunate is he who does not receive each more than once in twenty-four hours.

XXV.—JÁRUCK LABOO, BELMOROBÁ, HUZMEE GOLEE, ÁMBÁCHÁE,
TOPÁCOOL, KÁSUNDI!

A good long yarn this, and rather melodiously bawled out, hawking for sale *chutnies* and acids which are dear to every epicure and gourmand.

XXVI.—MONDÁ METOY!

XXVII.—ROOTEE, BISKOOT, NÁKKHÁTAYE!

XXVIII.—GOLÁPEE AOOREE CHYE ?

XXIX.—CHYE NAKOLE DÁNÁ ?

We pass over all these cries as calling for no particular remark.

Immediately after them follows the cry of

XXX.—CHÁNÁCHOOR GURMÁ-GURRUM.

Your *syce* is a great scoundrel and steals gram ; the horse is getting thinner ; you are afraid of being some day hauled up before the Magistrate by the Cruelty-Prevention-Society, which is so vigilant. But where the deuce does the gram go to ? Ask this man and you will know. All the stolen gram is converted into *Chánáchoor*, which, made hot with chillies, is much valued by drunkards both of high and low degree. *Brandy-páw* and *Chánáchoor Gurmá-Gurru*m comprise a feast for the gods, leaving aside the exquisites of the Calcutta University. What Young Bengal is there who has been able to resist the temptation of sharing them with his *syce* or his *sirdár-bearer*, if not in worse company ?

XXXI.—CHYE BUROPH ?

And there is the *Burophwáltá* coming in good time to cool down both the liquid-fire and chilled-gram ! Does any one wish to have revelations of pandemonium or the purgatory without the intervention of the *Planchette* ? Let him accompany a *Burophwálla* for the nonce, and he will see both places with his open eyes and learn all that he may require to know. Oh, what secrets these *Burophwállás* could divulge if they had a mind to !

Night now closes up the city of palaces, brothels, and iniquities for a brief while ; and no calls but those of the *Páháráwálla* and the jackal will be heard for the next few hours.. I may therefore close for the present with—

XXXII.—YÁPEED MOOSHKILLÁSHÁN KARAYGÁ,

Which is announced by a broad flaring light in the hands of a bearded *fakir*, who goes about from door to door, asking for that dole in the name of a Mahomedan saint which no Hindu housewife dares to refuse. All *Mooskill*, or difficulties, will be made *áshán*, or easy. Child's sickness, husband's irregularity of life, crustiness of old mother-in-law—every impediment to happiness will be removed at once. And what is the price to pay for this? One pice only!

A RUN TO SUMERU."

AFTER a hard day's work I was taking my *siesta* at the foot of my favourite citron-tree, having liberated my mind to divert itself for a while by a sentimental ramble over the vanities of existence. A slight rustling of leaves betrayed an intruder, and turning myself in that direction I saw, peering through the leaves, the mischievous face and leering eyes of that little rogue, Flibbertigibbet, who tried to hide himself the moment he was seen.

"Come out from the copse, you little devil. What are you doing there now?"

"A *cowrie* for your thoughts, nuncle!" said he, grinning. "You are moping over the vanities of life, and would like to have a run to Sumeru."

"To Sumeru, you stupid? What for there?"

"Why, to see how the gods dispose of themselves, to be sure."

"Well, yes: here it is nothing but envy, jealousy, the open smile, the secret stab. I should indeed like to see if the gods fare better than ourselves!" said I with a sigh. "But how is it possible to go there?"

"Possible! Why, where is the difficulty?"

"Why, you imp of Satan, is not Sumeru many millions of miles distant from us according to our Shástras? and even the accursed *m'lecthas*, who place it in Central Asia, place it very far from us; don't they?"

"But, nuncle dear, I know a short cut to it, and if you will only trust your neck with me, I shall land you there within an hour."

"A truce with your impertinence, jackanapes, or I will break your head."

"But that won't cure you of the mulligrubs, nuncle. Trust my wisdom once for all, and believe with old Will that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

"Well; really, this passes all bounds. You Flib, have you the audacity to quote Will?"

"Audacity be hanged. I dined with him three hours ago in the groves of Chaitra-rátha; and were not we boon companions, both of us?"

"Now take care, Flib, or I shall break your head in earnest. You have been snarling over a bone with some dog, I suppose, named after the immortal bard of Avon."

"I have been drinking nectar (*amrita*) with the whole club of them, man; with Shakspeare, Milton, Homer, Vyasa, and Válmik. Just trust your precious self with me for sixty minutes, and see if I don't get you into better company."

"Better company, you devil; it is sacrilege to say so."

"As good company then," said the urchin; "just get up from that vile mattress of yours and run after me."

I suspected that the little devil was after some mischief, but was quite in the humour to make one of his party, so I got up from the mattress and caught hold of him.

"Now tell me, grandson of Satan, what mischief you are plotting."

"No mischief at all, honour bright! Our wiser forefathers knew short cuts better than their children of the present day, barring some wise ones like myself. Trust me, and I take you to Sumeru in half-an-hour."

"Very good; but I will twist your neck if you play pranks with me: and now I am ready."

"All right, old horse; then give your legs full play."

Saying this the little devil ran before me as fast as an Arab of the desert, and my long shanks had very hard exercise to keep pace with him. The hour was just before nightfall; a full moon was in the sky. Well, I ran as I had never run before, and as I never hope to run again—unless it be before the Russians, should they ever come to us. Flib ran between men's legs and they did not know of it; but I knocked over two old women at the crossings, and outran three *Páharáwálláhs* who pursued me. After about half-an-hour's hard exercise, we entered an ugly lane behind some wine-shops in *Naaná Bazaár*, and I began to suspect the game that Flib was driving at.

"Well, you unchangeable imp of darkness; what's your business here?"

"Come along quietly, old codger, or you will disturb the constables who are asleep."

We entered a wine-shop by a secret door, but only to pass round to a drain in a corner, beside which Flib showed me a broken staircase leading to apartments below. I refused to follow him in the dark; but he said I must, or he would make me over to the constables as one engaged in violating the excise laws. After some further opposition I at last consented, and down we went—I thought to hell. I held by the coat of the little devil, lest he should slip from me in the dark. Several of the steps were broken, but Flib's foot was sure; and, after groping downwards for almost ten minutes, we came to what appeared to be the floor of a subterranean cavern, dimly lighted by one solitary *chiráq*. Here Flib showed me a narrow staircase which we were now to get up by.

"Now really, Flib, this is very naughty, asking a man of my weight and years to come down one flight of stairs merely to get up by another."

"Just hold your jaw, old fellow, will you? and do as

I tell you, or I shall leave you here in the midst of ghosts and infernal spirits who keep watch and ward over all this dreary region."

I of course kept quiet and followed, for it was useless remonstrating with the little devil; but the getting up by the staircase was a dreadful affair till, at last—will the reader believe me?—we were safely ushered on the top of a high mountain, enjoying the beautiful moonlight by which it was flooded, and breathing the pure air of an altitude some 20,000 feet above the level of the sea!!!

"Well, nuncle! Are your wits all safe? Where do you think you have landed at last?" asked the mischievous imp, with a twinkle of his roguish eye.

"Where indeed! Really, Flib, is this Sumeru?"

"Really it is."

"Then where be the gods—our Bruhmàs, and Vishnus, and Mahadèvas?"

"At supper, I suppose. Do you want to join them?"

"I join the gods at supper? Surely you are joking. The gods don't sup with men."

"Perhaps they do, though; at all events let us try. Just wait a bit here, till I get hold of a waiter—Sarya, Kuvera, or Varuna—to announce our arrival. They will now be in the western dome, I suppose."

And so Flib got hold of a waiter and sent word, and the gods agreed to see us. I need not describe the dome to profane readers. One of our poets has sung that it is of 'diamond splinters built, and gold,' and the description is so very faithful that I don't wish to improve upon it. But, as neither poet nor novelist has yet described the feastings on Sumeru, I owe it to the Goddess of Veracity and to the venerable President of the *Sanàtana Dharma Rakshini Shabhà* to give a faithful narration of all I saw.

The sire of gods and men, Bruhmà, was the first to accost us. It is a fit that assigns to him four heads or five. He has got one head only; and a large dunderhead it is: I did however see four hands; but they did not

hold either the *Veds* or the *Nāmamālā*. His godship was employed in gobbling a roasted turkey, and three of his hands were busy in cutting up morsels of that dainty food. In his fourth hand he held a bottle of Anderson's "Beehive No. 1," which he drank, as nectar is drunk in all parts of heaven, without the intervention of a cup.

"Well, mortals! what do you want here?" were his first words to us.

"Come 'to pay our respects' to your worship," said Flib. "Here's a muff who wishes to make an *astūnga pranam*."

"Oh, he is welcome. Does he like turkey and tiger's milk?"

"Not he; he is a goose."

"Let him take care then, or Vishnu will dumpode him. The Preserver is passionately fond of goose dumpoded, pork vindaloo, and Irish whisky."

The talk seemed to me to be somewhat indecorous and profane; what, in fact, I did not expect in the place we had come to. So to give it a turn I asked where his godship's wife—Seraswati—was?

"Oh! flirting with Mahadeva, I suppose. Just pop your head over that corner there, and you will find them all together. I only, as the father of gods and men, take my meals apart."

Well, we did pop our heads as directed, and sure they all were in the place pointed out, seated around a table of topaz lined with emerald, which was spread out with dainties and delicacies of all kinds. Mahadeva had a dish of beefsteaks before him, and some souced mango-fish, and chicken-curry soup; with a bottle of Cordial Old Tom of the finest quality. Seraswati, who was flirting with him desperately, was sipping shin-beef soup, and had also some *koftah* of mutton and a pint of Absinthe before her. Lakshmi was sucking stewed trotters of pork, and had already emptied a flask of Steinwein. But the best of eaters were Vishnu and Pārvatī, the former of whom had already disposed of one-half of a

roasted China pig, a goose dumped, some veal cutlets, and a bottle of Hollands, Scheidam; and was now leisurely sipping a pint of Maraschino de Zara: while the latter was giving free exercise to her beautiful teeth on a big *purrotáh*, a fore-quarter of roasted mutton, and some Bologna sausages, occasionally sipping also a fine-flavoured Hockheimer of the highest class.

They were all so busy with their own affairs that they did not seem disposed to take any notice of us. But Flib was determined that they should, and broke in with his own introduction.

"Look here, gods and goddesses," said he. "We have come from a very far country—India, you know, in an island appertaining to which the giant Ravana kept you in thralldom for so many years, on oatmeal and porridgo. This here, my companion, is a devout Hindu; he renders homage to you night and morning with flowers and *mantras*. Don't treat us therefore as strangers, pray. Shall we sit down alongside of you and help ourselves?"

"You be d—d," replied Párvati, who was particularly angry with us for having detected her in ogling at Vishnu. "How can your friend be a devout Hindu if he worships us only with flowers and *mantras*? He is old enough to know better than that, surely? We accept no offerings short of sirloins of beef, loin or forechine of pork, fine cock turkeys, wild ducks, poultry of all sort, and whisky and gin of the finest brand. Does he take us for fools that he offers us *mantras* and flowers only?"

"But, goddess dread!" said I, "fasting and prayers have in all ages been laid down as the best offerings for the gods, and even our sacred books—"

"Throw them into the sewers!" exclaimed Vishnu. "Example, old fellow, is better than precept. You have now the best example before your eyes. Do as we are doing; and when you wish to make an offering to us make your purchases, please, from the new Municipal market and the Great Eastern Hotel. We don't receive any inferior article

"And what then becomes of our *Saṁātana Dharma Rakshini Shabhā*, which the pious have established to regenerate the land?"

"If the pious want to regenerate their country they are welcome; but they must act as sensible men, not as big old unmentionables. Tell the venerable President that, old as he is, he has yet many things to learn. Our message to the Vice-President, the Sub-Vice-President, and the Secretary is the same. They mean well, but the course they are following is egregiously erroneous."

"Then, am I to understand that there is no salvation except through beefsteaks and alcohol?"

"None!" said Mahādeva. "Now be off, please, and let us finish our good cheer, to which you sinners have not contributed."

I was preparing to cut away; but Flib was determined to get a bellyful before retreating. The luxuries of heaven lay scattered around us on all sides, in the form of champagnes, clarets, hock, bottled porter, pale ale, Worcester sauce, pickled salmon, *paté de foie gras*, and what not? The greedy imp used his two little hands with steam-engine celerity. He also tried to force something into my mouth, but was detected in this by Vishnu, who muttered some spells which brought up a large almond tree before us, upon which we were forcibly mounted. The tree pierced through the air like a falcon, and on the following morning I was picked up in one of Clarke's drains in Rádhá Bazar.

Poor Flib has not yet been heard of. Any one giving information that will lead to his discovery, will be suitably rewarded.

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